TALES OF WONDER

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN
NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH

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Tales of Wonder

THE
CHILDREN'S CRIMSON CLASSICS

EDITED BY KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN
AND NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH

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A Book of Verse for Youth

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A Book of Verse for Children

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A Book of Rhymes for Children

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A Fourth Fairy Book

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OTHER VOLUMES TO FOLLOW

CRIMSON
CLASSICS

TALES OF WONDER

A Fourth Fairy Book

EDITED BY

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN and
NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH

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I WONDER!

I wonder if in Samarcand
Grave camels kneel in golden sand,
Still lading bales of magic spells
And charms a lover's wisdom tells,
To fare across the desert main
And bring the Princess home again—
I wonder!

I wonder in Japan to-day
If grateful beasts find out the way
To those who succoured them in pain,
And bring their blessings back again;
If cranes and sparrows take the shape
And all the ways of mortals ape—
I wonder!

In Bagdad, may there still be found
That potent powder, finely ground,
Which changes all who on it feast,
Monarch or slave, to bird or beast?
Do Caliphs taste and unafraid,
Turn storks, and weeping night-owls aid?
I wonder!

I wonder if in far Cathay
The nightingale still trills her lay
Beside the Porcelain Palace door,
And courtiers praise her as before!
If emperors dream of bygone things
And musing, weep the while she sings—
I wonder!

Such things have never chanced to me.
I wonder if to eyes that see
These magic visions still appear
In daily living, now and here;
If every flower is touched with glory,
If e'en the grass-blades tell a story—
I wonder!

N. A. S.

INTRODUCTION

There is a Chinese tale, known as "The Singing Prisoner," in which a friendless man is bound hand and foot and thrown into a dungeon, where he lies on the cold stones unfed and untended.

He has no hope of freedom and as complaint will avail him nothing, he begins to while away the hours by reciting poems and stories that he had learned in youth. So happily does he vary the tones of the speakers, feigning in turn the voices of kings and courtiers, lovers and princesses, birds and beasts, that he speedily draws all his fellow-prisoners around him, beguiling them by the spell of his genius.

Those who have food, eagerly press it upon him that his strength may be replenished; the jailer, who has been drawn into the charmed circle, loosens his bonds that he may move more freely, and finally grants him better quarters that the stories may be heard to greater advantage. Next the petty officers hear of the prisoner's marvellous gifts and report them everywhere with such effect that the higher authorities at last become interested and grant him a pardon.

Tales like these, that draw children from play and old men from the chimney-corner; that gain the freedom of a Singing Prisoner, and enable a Scheherazade to postpone from night to night her hour of death, are one and all pervaded by the same eternal magic. Pain, grief, terror, care, and bondage are all forgotten for a time when lakes of gems and enchanted waterfalls shimmer in the sunlight, when Rakshas's palaces rise, full-built, before our very eyes, or when Caballero's Knights of the Fish prance away on their magic chargers. "I wonder when!" "I wonder how!" "I wonder where!" we say as we follow them into the land of mystery.

So Youngling said when he heard the sound of the mysterious axe in the forest and asked himself who could be chopping there.

"I wonder!" he cried again when he listened to the faerie spade digging and delving at the top of the rocks.

"I wonder!" he questioned a third time when he drank from the streamlet and sought its source, finding it at last in the enchanted walnut. Axe and spade and walnut each gladly welcomed him, you remember, saying, "It 's long I've been looking for you, my lad!" for the new world is always awaiting its Columbus.

No such divine curiosity as that of Youngling's stirred the dull minds of his elder brothers and to them came no such reward. They jeered at the wanderer, reproaching him that he forever strayed from the beaten path, but when Youngling issues from the forest with the magic axe, the marvellous spade, and the miraculous nut to conquer his little world, we begin to ask ourselves which of the roads in the wood are indeed best worth following.

"Childish wonder is the first step in human wisdom," said the greatest of the world's showmen, but there are no wonders to the eyes that lack real vision. In the story of "What the Birds Said," for instance, the stolid jailer flatly denies that the feathered creatures have any message of import to convey; it is the poor captive who by sympathy and insight divines the meaning of their chatter and thus saves the city and his own life.

The tales in this book are of many kinds of wonder; of black magic, white magic and gray; ranging from the recital of strange and supernatural deeds and experiences to those that foreshadow modern conquests of nature and those that utilize the marvellous to teach a moral lesson. Choose among them as you will, for as the Spaniards might say, "The book is at your feet; whatever you admire is yours!"

"Tales of Wonder" is the fourth and last of our Fairy Series in the Children's Classics, so this preface is in the nature of an epilogue. "The Fairy Ring," "Magic Casements," "Tales of Laughter" — each had its separate message for its little public, and "Tales of Wonder" rings down the curtain.

INTRODUCTION

There was once a little brown nightingale that sang melodious strains in the river-thickets of the Emperor's garden, but when she was transported to the Porcelain Palace the courtiers soon tired of her wild-wood notes and supplanted her with a wonderful bird-automaton, fashioned of gold and jewels.

Time went on, but the Emperor, wisest of the court, began at last to languish, and to long unceasingly for the fresh, free note of the little brown nightingale. It was sweeter by far than the machine-made trills and roulades of the artificial songster, and he felt instinctively that only by its return could death be charmed away.

The old, yet ever new, tales in these four books are like the wild notes of the nightingale in the river-thicket, and many are the emperors to whom they have sung.

Whenever we tire of what is trivial and paltry in the machine-made fairy tale of to-day, let us open one of these crimson volumes and hear again the note of the little brown bird in the thicket.

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN.

Tales of Wonder

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I Wonder

ONCE on a time there was a man who had three sons — Peter, Paul, and the least of all, whom they called Youngling. I can't say the man had anything more than these three sons, for he had n't one penny to rub against another; and he told the lads, over and over again, that they must go out into the world and try to earn their bread, for at home there was nothing to be looked for but starving to death.

Now near by the man's cottage was the King's palace, and, you must know, just against the windows a great oak had sprung up, which was so stout and tall that it took away all the light. The King had said he would give untold treasure to the man who could fell the oak, but no one was man enough for that, for as soon as one chip of the oak's trunk flew off, two grew in its stead.

A well, too, the King desired, which was to hold water for the whole year; for all his neighbours had wells, but he had n't any, and that he thought a shame. So the King said he would give both money and goods to anyone who could dig him such a well as would hold water for a whole year round, but no one could do it, for the palace lay high, high up on a hill, and they could only dig a few inches before they came upon the living rock.

But, as the King had set his heart on having these two things done, he had it given out far and wide, in all the churches of his dominion, that he who could fell the big oak in the King's courtyard, and get him a well that would hold water the whole year round, should have the Princess and half the kingdom.

Well! you may easily know there was many a man who came to try his luck; but all their hacking and hewing, all their digging and delving, were of no avail. The oak grew taller and stouter at every stroke, and the rock grew no softer.

So one day the three brothers thought they 'd set off and try, too, and their father had n't a word against it; for, even if they did n't get the Princess and half the kingdom, it might happen that they would get a place somewhere with a good master, and that was all he wanted. So when the brothers said they thought of going to the palace, their father said "Yes" at once, and Peter, Paul, and Youngling went off from their home.

They had not gone far before they came to a fir-wood, and up along one side of it rose a steep hillside, and as they went they heard something hewing and hacking away up on the hill among the trees.

"I wonder now what it is that is hewing away up yonder?" said Youngling.

"You are always so clever with your wonderings," said Peter and Paul, both at once. "What wonder is it, pray, that a woodcutter should stand and hack up on a hillside?"

"Still, I 'd like to see what it is, after all," said Youngling, and up he went.

"Oh, if you 're such a child, 't will do you good to go and take a lesson," cried out his brothers after him.

But Youngling did n't care for what they said; he climbed the steep hillside toward where the noise came, and when he reached the place, what do you think he saw?

Why, an axe that stood there hacking and hewing, all of itself, at the trunk of a fir.

"Good day," said Youngling. "So you stand here all alone and hew, do you?"

"Yes, here I 've stood and hewed and hacked a long, long time, waiting for you, my lad," said the Axe.

"Well, here I am at last," said Youngling, as he took the Axe, pulled it off its haft, and stuffed both head and haft into his wallet.

So when he climbed down again to his brothers, they began to jeer and laugh at him.

"And now, what funny thing was it you saw up yonder on the hillside?" they said.

"Oh, it was only an axe we heard," said Youngling.

When they had gone a bit farther, they came under a steep spur of rock, and up above they heard something digging and shovelling.

"I wonder, now," said Youngling, "what it is digging and shovelling up yonder at the top of the rock?"

"Ah, you 're always so clever with your wonderings," said Peter and Paul again; "as if you 'd never heard a woodpecker hacking and pecking at a hollow tree."

"Well, well," said Youngling, "I think it would be a piece of fun just to see what it really is."

And so off he set to climb the rock, while the others laughed and made game of him. But he did n't care a bit for that; up he clambered, and when he got near the top, what do you think he saw? Why, a spade that stood there digging and delving.

"Good day," said Youngling. "So you stand here all alone, and dig and delve?"

"Yes, that 's what I do," said the Spade, "and that 's what I 've done this many a long day, waiting for you, my lad."

"Well, here I am," said Youngling again, as he took the Spade and knocked off its handle, and put it into his wallet; and then he climbed down again to his brothers.

"Well, what was it, so strange and rare," said Peter and Paul, "that you saw up there at the top of the rock?"

"Oh," said Youngling, "nothing more than a spade; that was what we heard."

So they went on again a good bit, till they came to a brook. They were thirsty all three, after their long walk, and so they lay down beside the brook to have a drink.

"I have a great fancy to see where this brook comes from," said Youngling.

So up alongside the brook he went, in spite of all that his brothers shouted after him. Nothing could stop him. On he went. And as he went up and up, the brook grew smaller and smaller, and at last, a little way farther on, what do you think he saw? Why, a great walnut, and out of that the water trickled.

"Good day," said Youngling again. "So you lie here and trickle, and run down all alone?"

"Yes, I do," said the Walnut "and here have I trickled and run this many a long day, waiting for you, my lad."

"Well, here I am," said Youngling, as he took a lump of moss and plugged up the hole, so that the water might n't run out. Then he put the Walnut into his wallet, and ran down to his brothers.

"Well, now," said Peter and Paul, "have you found out where the water comes from? A rare sight it must have been!"

"Oh, after all, it was only a hole it ran out of," said Youngling, and the others laughed and made game of him again, but Youngling did n't mind that a bit.

So when they had gone a little farther, they came to the King's palace; but as every man in the kingdom had heard that he might win the Princess and half the realm, if he could only fell the big oak and dig the King's well, so many had come to try their luck that the oak was now twice as stout and big as it had been at first, for you will remember that two chips grew for every one they hewed out with their axes.

So the King had now laid it down as a punishment that if anyone tried and could n't fell the oak, he should be put on a barren island, and both his ears were to be clipped off. But the two brothers did n't let themselves be frightened by this threat; they were quite sure they could fell the oak, and Peter, as he was the eldest, was to try his hand first; but it went with him as with all the rest who had hewn at the oak: for every chip he cut two grew in its place. So the King's men seized him, and clipped off both his ears, and put him out on the island.

Now Paul was to try his luck, but he fared just the same! When he had hewn two or three strokes, they began to see the oak grow, and so the King's men seized him, too, and clipped his ears, and put him out on the island; and his ears they clipped closer, because they said he ought to have taken a lesson from his brother.

So now Youngling was to try.

"If you want to look like a marked sheep, we 're quite ready to clip your ears at once, and then you 'll save yourself some trouble," said the King, for he was angry with him for his brothers' sake.

"Well, I 'd just like to try first," said Youngling, and so he got leave. Then he took his Axe out of his wallet and fitted it to its handle.

"Hew away!" said he to his Axe, and away it hewed, making the chips fly again, so that it was n't long before down came the oak.

When that was done, Youngling pulled out his Spade and fitted it to its handle.

"Dig away!" said he to his Spade, and so the Spade began to dig and delve till the earth and rock flew out in splinters, and he soon had the well deep enough, you may believe.

And when he had got it as big and deep as he chose, Youngling took out his Walnut and laid it in one corner of the well, and pulled the plug of moss out.

"Trickle and run," said Youngling, and so the Nut trickled and ran till the water gushed out of the hole in a stream, and in a short time the well was brimful.

So as Youngling had felled the oak which shaded the King's palace, and dug a well in the palace-yard, he got the Princess and half the kingdom, as the King had said; but it was lucky for Peter and Paul that they had lost their ears, else they might have grown tired of hearing how everyone said each hour of the day:

"Well, after all, Youngling was n't so much out of his mind when he took to wondering."

What the Birds Said

A LAD named Kong Hia Chiang, who lived with his parents among the mountains, understood the language of the birds. One twilight, as he sat at his books, a flock of birds alighted on a tree before his window and sang:

> "Kong Hia Chiang, on the southern plain
> A sheep awaits you by a heap of stones,—
> A fine fat wether, that the dogs have slain;
> You eat the flesh and we will pick the bones!"

Kong Hia Chiang went and brought in the torn sheep and cooked it during the night. The next morning a shepherd came and said that one of his sheep was missing; he had found blood on the meadow, had followed the trail, and it had brought him to that house. Kong Hia Chiang acknowledged that he had brought in the sheep, but declared that the dogs had killed it, and that its death and the place where it might be found had been made known to him by birds. His story was considered to be an impudent fabrication, and he was haled away to prison.

While he was awaiting his trial before the magistrate, a bird, flying eastward, perched on the wall, saw him, and piped:

> "Foes approach the western border,
> Banners, bows, and spears in order,
> While the gate lacks watch or warder."

Kong Hia Chiang thereupon so vehemently besought his jailer to inform the magistrate of the imminent danger of invasion through the unprotected Western Pass, that the jailer, though wholly incredulous, decided to test his power of comprehending the utterances of birds. He took some rice, soaked a part of it in sweetened water, and a part in brine, and then spread the whole on the roof of a shed into which he brought Kong Hia Chiang, and asked him if he knew why so many birds were chirruping overhead. Kong Hia Chiang at once replied that those on the roof were hailing those that were flying past, and saying:

"Call a halt; call a halt;
Here is rice fresh and white;
Half is sweet, half is salt;
Stop a bit; take a bite."

The jailer was at once convinced that the prisoner understood the speech of birds, and therefore hastened to the magistrate to report the warning and the test. The magistrate sent a swift courier to notify the military officers, and a scout was sent out to the west. He soon confirmed the message of Kong Hia Chiang, and troops were dispatched to strengthen the garrison at the pass, the invaders thereby being successfully repelled. The great service rendered to the country by Kong Hia Chiang was acknowledged by his sovereign, who afterward made use of his remarkable talent, invited him to study with the princes, and eventually raised him to a high rank among the nobles of the empire.

The Smith and the Fairies

YEARS ago there lived in Crossbrig a smith of the name of MacEachern. This man had an only child, a boy of about thirteen or fourteen years of age, cheerful, strong, and healthy. All of a sudden he fell ill; took to his bed and moped whole days away. No one could tell what was the matter with him, and the boy himself could not, or would not, tell how he felt. He was wasting away fast; getting thin, old, and yellow; and his father and all his friends were afraid that he would die.

At last one day, after the boy had been lying in this condition for a long time, getting neither better nor worse, always confined to bed, but with an extraordinary appetite — one day, while sadly revolving these things, and standing idly at his forge, with no heart to work, the smith was agreeably surprised to see an old man, well known for his sagacity and knowledge of out-of-the-way things, walk into his workshop. Forthwith he told him the occurrence which had clouded his life.

The old man looked grave as he listened; and after sitting a long time pondering over all he had heard, gave his opinion thus: "It is not your son you have got. The boy has been carried away by the '*Daione Sith*,' and they have left a *Sibhreach* in his place."

"Alas! and what then am I to do?" said the smith. "How am I ever to see my own son again?"

"I will tell you how," answered the old man. "But, first, to make sure that it is not your own son you have got, take as many empty egg-shells as you can get, go into his room, spread them out carefully before his sight, then proceed to draw water with them, carrying them two and two in your hands as if they were a great weight, and arrange them when full, with every sort of earnestness around the fire."

The smith accordingly gathered as many broken egg-shells as he could get, went into the room, and proceeded to carry out all his instructions.

He had not been long at work before there arose from the bed a shout of laughter, and the voice of the seeming sick boy exclaimed, "I am eight hundred years of age, and I have never seen the like of that before." The smith returned and told the old man.

"Well, now," said the sage to him, "did I not tell you that it was not your son you had: your son is in Borracheill in a digh there (that is, a round green hill frequented by fairies). Get rid as soon as possible of this intruder, and I think I may promise you your son. You must light a very large and bright fire before the bed on which this stranger is lying. He will ask you, 'What is the use of such a fire as that?' Answer him at once, 'You will see that presently!' and then seize him, and throw him into the middle of it. If it is your own son you have got, he will call out to you to save him; but if not, the thing will fly through the roof."

The smith again followed the old man's advice: kindled a large fire, answered the question put to him as he had been directed to do, and seizing the child flung him in without hesitation. The *Sibhreach* gave an awful yell, and sprang through the roof, where a hole had been left to let the smoke out.

On a certain night the old man told him the green round hill, where the fairies kept the boy, would be open, and on that date the smith, having provided himself with a Bible, a dirk, and a crowing cock, was to proceed to the hill. He would hear singing and dancing, and much merriment going on, he had been told, but he was to advance boldly; the Bible he carried would be a certain safeguard to him against any danger from the fairies. On entering the hill he was to stick the dirk in the threshold, to prevent the hill from closing upon him; "and then," continued the old man, "on entering you will see a spacious apartment before you, beautifully clean, and there, standing far within, working at a forge, you will also see your own son. When you are questioned, say you come to seek him, and will not go without him."

Not long after this, the time came round, and the smith sallied forth, prepared as instructed. Sure enough as he approached the hill, there was a light where light was seldom seen before. Soon after, a sound of piping, dancing, and joyous merriment reached the anxious father on the night wind.

Overcoming every impulse to fear, the smith approached the threshold steadily, stuck the dirk into it as directed, and entered. Protected by the Bible he carried on his breast, the fairies could not touch him; but they asked him, with a good deal of displeasure, what he wanted there. He answered, "I want my son, whom I see down there, and I will not go without him."

Upon hearing this the whole company before him gave a loud laugh, which wakened up the cock he carried dozing in his arms, who at once leaped up on his shoulders, clapped his wings lustily, and crowed loud and long.

The fairies, incensed, seized the smith and his son, and throwing them out of the hill, flung the dirk after them, and in an instant all was dark.

For a year and a day the boy never did a turn of work, and hardly ever spoke a word; but at last one day, sitting by his father and watching him finishing a sword he was making for some chief, and which he was very particular about, he suddenly exclaimed, "That is not the way to do it;" and taking the tools from his father's hands he set to work himself in his place, and soon fashioned a sword, the like of which was never seen in the country before.

From that day the young man wrought constantly with his father, and became the inventor of a peculiarly fine and well-tempered weapon, the making of which kept the two smiths, father and son, in constant employment, spread their fame far and wide, and gave them the means in abundance, as they before had the disposition, to live content with all the world and very happily with each other.

*The Grateful Crane**

FIGHTING sparrows fear not man," as the old proverb says. Yet it was not a sparrow but a crane that fell down out of the air. Near the feet of Musai, the farmer's boy, it lay, as he waded in the ooze of his rice field, working from daybreak to sundown.

The farmer's boy was used to cranes, for in the plough's furrow on the dry land these long-legged birds walked close behind, not the least afraid in the Mikado's dominions. For who would hurt the white-breasted creature, that every one called the Honourable Lord Crane? The graceful birds seemed to love to be near man, when he worked in the wet or paddy fields, where under four inches of water the seeds were planted and the rice plants grew. So graceful in all its movements is the crane that many a dainty little maid who acts politely hears herself spoken of as the "bird that rises from the water without muddying the stream."

Musai hurried to the grassy bank at the edge of the paddy field as fast as he could wade through the liquid mud, to see what was the matter with the crane. Throwing down his hoe, and looking in the grass, he saw that an arrow was sticking in the crane's back, and that red drops of blood dappled its white plumage. Instead of seeming frightened when the man came near, the bird bent down its neck, as if to submit to whatever the farmer's boy should do.

Gently Musai plucked out the arrow and helped the bird to rise, pushing back the undergrowth so that its broad white pinions could have free play. After a few feeble attempts to fly it spread its wings, rose up from the earth, and after circling several times round its benefactor as though to thank him, it flew off to the mountain.

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* From "The Fire-fly's Lovers," by William Elliot Griffis, copyright, 1008, by T. Y. Crowell & Co.

Musai went back to his work, hoping that in season his labor would yield a good crop. He had his widowed mother to support and must needs toil every day. His one delight was to come home, weary after the long hours of labour in the muddy rice field, and have a hot bath. This his mother always had ready for him. Then, clean and with a fresh kimono, and a little rest before supper-time, he was ready for a quiet evening with the neighbours.

So in routine the days passed by until autumn was near at hand. One day, returning before the sun was fully set, he found seated beside his mother a lovely girl. In spite of his contemptible appearance after a day's toil, working barelegged in the mire, she welcomed him with the grace of a princess.

Not thinking of returning the salute in his unwashed condition, he took off his head-kerchief, drew in his breath, and bowing to his mother asked.

"Who is the honourable That Side, and how comes she into this miserable hut?"

"My son," replied his mother, "though you are a man, you have as yet no wife. Your virtues of obedience, filial reverence, fidelity, and politeness have made you well known. Hence this fair damsel is not unwilling to become your wife. But, without your consent, I could not answer her proposal. What do you think about it?"

The young farmer, though highly complimented, at first said little, but he thought hard. "Daintily reared, and perhaps of noble birth is she, but should I gratify her desire, how can she bear the poverty to which we are accustomed? Will she be patient, when she has to suffer hunger? Or, shall we be separated, and that which promises love and happiness last only a little while, to pass away, leaving gloom and sorrow behind?"

But as the days slipped along, and when he saw how kind she was to her new mother, ever patient and self-denying in loving reverence, all his fears were driven away like clouds before the wind. So the young man and woman were married.

But when the full autumn-time came for the rice ears to fill and round out, nothing was found but husk and shell. The crop was a total failure. With heavy taxes unpaid and no food in the house, starvation loomed before them. By winter, all were in dire distress.

Then the patient wife revealed new powers and cheered her husband, saying,

"I can spin such cloth as was never made in this province, if you will build me a separate room. I cannot weave here, or make the fine pattern of red and white except when alone and in perfect silence. Build me a room, and the money you need will flow in."

The old mother was doubtful as to her daughter-in-law's project and even Musai was but half-hearted. Yet he went to work diligently. With beam, and wattle, and thatch, floor of mats and window of latticed paper, with walls made tight because well daubed with clay, he built the room apart. There alone, day by day, secluded from all, the sweet wife toiled unseen. The mother and husband patiently waited, until after a week, the little woman rejoined the family circle. In her hands she bore a roll of woven stuff, white and shining, as lustrous and pure as fresh fallen snow. Yet here and there, a crimson thread in the stuff did but intensify the purity of the otherwise unflecked whiteness. Pure red and pure white were the only colours of this wonderful fabric.

"What shall we call it?" inquired the amazed husband.

"It has no name, for there is none other in the world like it," said the fair weaver.

"But I must have a name. I shall take it to the Daimio. He will not buy, if he does not know how it is called."

"Then," said the wife, "tell him its name is 'White Crane's-down cloth.'"

Quickly passed the snowy fabric into the hands of the lord of the castle, who sent it as a present to the Empress in Kioto. All were amazed by it, and the Empress commanded the donor to be richly rewarded. The farmer husband, bearing a thousand pieces of coin in his bag, hastened home to spread the shining silver at his mother's feet and to thank the wife who had brought him fortune. A feast followed, and for many weeks the family lived easily on the money thus gained. Then, when again on the edge of need, Musai asked his wife if she were willing to weave another web of the wonderful Crane's-down cloth.

Cheerfully she agreed, cautioning him to leave her in privacy, and not to look upon her until she came forth with the cloth.

But alas for the spirit of prying impertinence and wicked curiosity! Not satisfied with having been delivered from starvation by a wife that served him like a slave, Musai stealthily crept up to the paper partition, touched his tongue to the latticed pane, and poked his finger noiselessly through, thus making a round hole to which he glued his eye and looked in.

What a sight! There was no woman at work, but a noble white crane — the same that he had seen in the field, and from whose back he had extracted the hunter's arrow. Bending over the spinning wheel, the bird pulled from her own breast the silky down, and by twining and twisting made it into the finest thread which mortals ever beheld. From time to time, she pressed from her heart's blood red drops with which to dye some strands, and thus the weaving went on. The web of the cloth was nearly finished.

Musai astounded looked on without moving, until suddenly called by his mother, he cried out in response, "Yes, I'm coming."

The startled crane turned and saw the eye in the wall. Throwing down thread and web she moved angrily to the door, gave a shrill scream and flew out under the sky. Like a white speck against the blue hills, she appeared for a little while and then was lost to sight.

Son and mother once more faced poverty and loneliness, and Musai again splashed barelegged in the rice field.

Little Surya Bai

A POOR Milkwoman was once going into the town with cans full of milk to sell. She took with her her little daughter (a baby of about a year old), having no one in whose charge to leave her at home. Being tired, she sat down by the roadside, placing the child and the cans full of milk beside her; when, on a sudden, two large eagles flew overhead; and one, swooping down, seized the child, and flew away with her out of the mother's sight.

Very far, far away the eagles carried the little baby, even beyond the borders of her native land, until they reached their home in a lofty tree. There the old eagles had built a great nest; it was made of iron and wood, and was as big as a little house; there was iron all round, and to get in and out you had to go through seven iron doors.

In this stronghold they placed the little baby, and because she was like a young eaglet they called her Surya Bai (the Sun Lady). The eagles both loved the child; and daily they flew into distant countries to bring her rich and precious things — clothes that had been made for princesses, precious jewels, wonderful playthings, all that was most costly and rare.

One day, when Surya Bai was twelve years old, the old husband Eagle said to his wife, "Wife, our daughter has no diamond ring on her little finger, such as princesses wear; let us go and fetch her one." "Yes," said the other old Eagle; "but to fetch it we must go very far." "True," rejoined he, "such a ring is not to be got nearer than the Red Sea, and that is a twelvemonth's journey from here; nevertheless we will go." So the Eagles started off, leaving Surya Bai in the strong nest, with twelve months' provisions (that she might not be hungry whilst they were away), and a little dog and cat to take care of her.

Not long after they were gone, one day the naughty little cat stole some food from the store, for doing which Surya Bai punished her. The cat did not like being whipped, and she was still more annoyed at having been caught stealing; so, in revenge, she ran to the fireplace (they were obliged to keep a fire always burning in the Eagle's nest, as Surya never went down from the tree, and would not otherwise have been able to cook her dinner), and put out the fire. When the little girl saw this she was much vexed, for the cat had eaten their last cooked provisions, and she did not know what they were to do for food. For three whole days Surya Bai puzzled over the difficulty, and for three whole days she and the dog and the cat had nothing to eat. At last she thought she would climb to the edge of the nest, and see if she could see any fire in the country below; and, if so, she would go down and ask the people who lighted it to give her a little with which to cook her dinner. So she climbed to the edge of the nest. Then, very far away on the horizon, she saw a thin curl of blue smoke. So she let herself down from the tree, and all day long she walked in the direction whence the smoke came. Toward evening she reached the place, and found it rose from a small hut in which sat an old woman warming her hands over a fire. Now, though Surya Bai did not know it, she had reached the Rakshas's country, and this old woman was none other than a wicked old Rakshas, who lived with her son in the little hut. The young Rakshas, however, had gone out for the day. When the old Rakshas saw Surya Bai, she was much astonished, for the girl was beautiful as the sun, and her rich dress resplendent with jewels; and she said to herself, "How lovely this child is; what a dainty morsel she would be! Oh, if my son were only here we would kill her, and boil her, and eat her. I will try and detain her till his return."

Then, turning to Surya Bai, she said, "Who are you, and what do you want?"

Surya Bai answered, "I am the daughter of the great Eagles, but they have gone a far journey, to fetch me a diamond ring, and the fire has died out in the nest. Give me, I pray you, a little from your hearth."

The Rakshas replied, "You shall certainly have some, only first pound this rice for me, for I am old, and have no daughter to help me."

Then Surya Bai pounded the rice, but the young Rakshas had not returned by the time she had finished; so the old Rakshas said to her, "If you are kind, grind this corn for me, for it is hard work for my old hands."

Then she ground the corn, but still the young Rakshas came not; and the old Rakshas said to her, "Sweep the house for me first, and then I will give you the fire."

So Surya Bai swept the house; but still the young Rakshas did not come.

Then his mother said to Surya Bai, "Why should you be in such a hurry to go home? Fetch me some water from the well, and then you shall have the fire."

And she fetched the water. When she had done so, Surya Bai said, "I have done all your bidding, now give me the fire, or I will go elsewhere and seek it."

The old Rakshas was grieved because her son had not returned home; but she saw she could detain Surya Bai no longer, so she said, "Take the fire and go in peace; take also some parched corn, and scatter it along the road as you go, so as to make a pretty little pathway from our house to yours"— and so saying, she gave Surya Bai several handfuls of parched corn. The girl took them, fearing no evil, and as she went she scattered the grains on the road. Then she climbed back into the nest and shut the seven iron doors, and lighted the fire, and cooked the food, and gave the dog and the cat some dinner, and took some herself, and went to sleep.

No sooner had Surya Bai left the Rakshas's hut, than the young Rakshas returned, and his mother said to him, "Alas, alas, my son, why did not you come sooner? Such a sweet little lamb has been here, and now we have lost her." Then she told him all about Surya Bai.

"Which way did she go?" asked the young Rakshas; "only tell me that, and I 'll have her before morning."

His mother told him how she had given Surya Bai the parched corn to scatter on the road; and when he heard that, he followed up the track, and ran, and ran, and ran, till he came to the foot of the tree.

There, looking up, he saw the nest high in the branches above them.

Quick as thought, up he climbed, and reached the great outer door; and he shook it, and shook it, but he could not get in, for Surya Bai had bolted it. Then he said, "Let me in, my child, let me in; I 'm the great Eagle, and I have come from very far, and brought you many beautiful jewels; and here is a splendid diamond ring to fit your little finger." But Surya Bai did not hear him — she was fast asleep.

He next tried to force open the door again, but it was too strong for him. In his efforts, however, he had broken off one of his finger nails (now the nail of a Rakshas is most poisonous), which he left sticking in the crack of the door when he went away.

Next morning Surya Bai opened all the doors, in order to look down on the world below; but when she came to the seventh door a sharp thing, which was sticking in it, ran into her hand, and immediately she fell down dead.

At that same moment the two poor Eagles returned from their long, wearisome journey, bringing a beautiful diamond ring, which they had fetched for their little favourite from the Red Sea.

There she lay on the threshold of the nest, beautiful as ever but cold and dead.

The Eagles could not bear the sight; so they placed the ring on her finger, and then, with loud cries, flew off to return no more.

But a little while after there chanced to come by a great Rajah, who was out on a hunting expedition. He came with hawks, and hounds, and attendants, and horses, and pitched his camp under the tree in which the Eagles' nest was built. Then looking up, he saw, amongst the topmost branches, what appeared like a queer little house; and he sent some of his attendants to see what it was. They soon returned, and told the

Rajah that up in the tree was a curious thing like a cage, having seven iron doors, and that on the threshold of the first door lay a fair maiden, richly dressed; that she was dead, and that beside her stood a little dog and a little cat.

At this the Rajah commanded that they should be fetched down, and when he saw Surya Bai he felt very sad to think that she was dead. And he took her hand to feel if it were already stiff; but all her limbs were supple, nor had she become cold, as the dead are cold; and, looking again at her hand, the Rajah saw that a sharp thing, like a long thorn, had run into the tender palm, almost far enough to pierce through to the back of her hand.

He pulled it out, and no sooner had he done so than Surya Bai opened her eyes, and stood up, crying, "Where am I? and who are you? Is it a dream, or true?"

The Rajah answered, "It is all true, beautiful lady. I am the Rajah of a neighbouring land; pray tell me who are you."

She replied, "I am the Eagles' child."

But he laughed. "Nay," he said, "that cannot be; you are some great Princess."

"No," she answered, "I am no royal lady; what I say is true. I have lived all my life in this tree. I am only the Eagles' child."

Then the Rajah said, "If you are not a Princess born, I will make you one; say only you will be my Queen."

Surya Bai consented, and the Rajah took her to his kingdom and made her his Queen. But Surya Bai was not his only wife, and the first Ranee, his other wife, was both envious and jealous of her.

The Rajah gave Surya Bai many trustworthy attendants to guard her and be with her; and one old woman loved Surya Bai more than all the rest, and used to say to her, "Don't be too intimate with the first Ranee, dear lady, for she wishes you no good, and she has power to do you harm. Some day she may poison or otherwise injure you." But Surya Bai would answer her, "Nonsense! what is there to be alarmed about? Why cannot we both live happily together like two sisters?" Then the old woman would rejoin, "Ah, dear lady, may you never live to rue your confidence! I pray my fears may prove folly." So Surya Bai went often to see the first Ranee, and the first Ranee also came often to see her.

One day they were standing in the palace courtyard, near a tank, where the Rajah's people used to bathe, and the first Ranee said to Surya Bai, "What pretty jewels you have, sister; let me try them on for a minute, and see how I look in them."

The old woman was standing beside Surya Bai, and she whispered to her, "Do not lend her your jewels."

"Hush, you silly old woman," answered she. "What harm will it do?" and she gave the Ranee her jewels.

Then the Ranee said, "How pretty all your things are! Do you not think they look well even on me! Let us come down to the tank; it is as clear as glass, and we can see ourselves reflected in it, and how these jewels will shine in the clear water!"

The old woman, hearing this, was much alarmed, and begged Surya Bai not to venture near the tank, but she said, "I bid you be silent; I will not distrust my sister." And she went down to the tank. Then, when no one was near, and they were both leaning over, looking at their reflections in the water, the first Ranee pushed Surya Bai into the tank, who, sinking under the water, was drowned; and from the place where her body fell there sprang up a bright golden sunflower.

The Rajah shortly afterward inquired where Surya Bai was, but nowhere could she be found. Then, very angry, he came to the first Ranee and said, "Tell me where the child is. You have made away with her."

But she answered, "You do me wrong; I know nothing of her. Doubtless that old woman whom you allowed to be always with her, has done her some harm." So the Rajah ordered the poor old woman to be thrown into prison.

He tried to forget Surya Bai and all her pretty ways, but it was no good. Wherever he went he saw her face. Whatever he heard, he still listened for her voice. Every day he grew more miserable; he would not eat or drink; and as for the other Ranee, he could not bear to speak to her. All his people said, "He will surely die."

When matters were in this state, the Rajah one day wandered to the edge of the tank, and bending over the parapet, looked into the water. Then he was surprised to see, growing out of the tank close beside him a stately golden flower; and as he watched it, the sunflower gently bent its head and leaned down toward him. The Rajah's heart was softened, and he kissed its leaves and murmured, "This flower reminds me of my lost wife. I love it, it is fair and gentle as she used to be." And every day he would go down to the tank and sit and watch the flower. When the Ranee heard this, she ordered her servants to go and dig the sunflower up, and to take it far into the jungle and burn it. Next time the Rajah went to the tank he found his flower gone, and he was much grieved, but none dared say who had done it.

Then, in the jungle, from the place where the ashes of the sunflower had been thrown, there sprang up a young mango tree, tall and straight, that grew so quickly, and became such a beautiful tree, that it was the wonder of all the country round. At last, on its topmost bough, came one fair blossom; and the blossom fell, and the little mango grew rosier and rosier, and larger and larger, till so wonderful was it both for size and shape that people flocked from far and near only to look at it.

But none ventured to gather it, for it was to be kept for the Rajah himself.

Now one day, the poor Milkwoman, Surya Bai's mother, was returning homeward after her day's work with the empty milk cans, and being very tired with her long walk to the bazaar, she lay down under the mango tree and fell asleep. Then, right into her largest milk can, fell the wonderful mango! When the poor woman awoke and saw what had happened, she was dreadfully frightened, and thought to herself, "If any one sees me with this wonderful fruit, that all the Rajah's people have been watching for so many, many weeks, they will never believe that I did not steal it, and I shall be put in prison. Yet it is no good leaving it here; besides, it fell off of itself into my milk can. I will therefore take it home as secretly as possible, and share it with my children."

So the Milkwoman covered up the can in which the mango was, and took it quickly to her home, where she placed it in the corner of the room, and put over it a dozen other milk cans, piled one above another. Then, as soon as it was dark, she called her husband and eldest son (for she had six or seven children), and said to them, "What good fortune do you think has befallen me to-day?"

"We cannot guess," they said. "Nothing less," she went on, "than the wonderful, wonderful mango falling into one of my milk cans while I slept! I have brought it home with me; it is in that lowest can. Go, husband, call all the children to have a slice; and you, my son, take down that pile of cans and fetch me the mango." "Mother," he said, when he got to the lowest can, "you were joking, I suppose, when you told us there was a mango here."

"No, not at all," she answered; "there is a mango there. I put it there myself an hour ago."

"Well, there 's something quite different now," replied the son. "Come and see."

The Milkwoman ran to the place, and there, in the lowest can, she saw, not the mango, but a little tiny wee lady, richly dressed in red and gold, and no bigger than a mango! On her head shone a bright jewel like a little sun.

"This is very odd," said the mother. "I never heard of such a thing in my life! But since she has been sent to us, I will take care of her, as if she were my own child."

Every day the little lady grew taller and taller, until she was the size of an ordinary woman; she was gentle and lovable, but always sad and quiet, and she said her name was "Surya Bai."

The children were all very curious to know her history, but the Milkwoman and her husband would not let her be teased to tell who she was, and said to the children, "Let us wait. By and by, when she knows us better, she will most likely tell us her story of her own accord."

Now it came to pass that once, when Surya Bai was taking water from the well for the old Milkwoman, the Rajah rode by, and as he saw her walking along, he cried, "That is my wife," and rode after her as fast as possible. Surya Bai hearing a great clatter of horses' hoofs, was frightened, and ran home as fast as possible, and hid herself; and when the Rajah reached the place there was only the old Milkwoman to be seen standing at the door of her hut.

Then the Rajah said to her, "Give her up, old woman, you have no right to keep her; she is mine, she is mine!"

But the old woman answered, "Are you mad? I don't know what you mean."

The Rajah replied, "Do not attempt to deceive me. I saw my wife go in at your door; she must be in the house."

"Your wife?" screamed the old woman — "your wife? you mean my daughter, who lately returned from the well! Do you think I am going to give my child up at your command? You are Rajah in your palace, but I am Rajah in my own house; and I won't give up my little daughter for any bidding of yours. Be off with you, or I 'll pull out your beard." And so saying, she seized a long stick and attacked the Rajah, calling out loudly to her husband and sons, who came running to her aid.

The Rajah, seeing matters were against him, and having outridden his attendants (and not being quite certain moreover whether he had seen Surya Bai, or whether she might not have been really the poor Milkwoman's daughter), rode off and returned to his palace.

However, he determined to sift the matter. As a first step he went to see Surya Bai's old attendant, who was still in prison. From her he learned enough to make him believe she was not only entirely innocent of Surya Bai's death, but gravely to suspect the first Ranee of having caused it. He therefore ordered the old woman to be set at liberty, still keeping a watchful eye on her, and bade her prove her devotion to her long-lost mistress by going to the Milkwoman's house, and bringing him as much information as possible about the family, and more particularly about the girl he had seen returning from the well.

So the attendant went to the Milkwoman's house, and made friends with her, and bought some milk, and afterward she stayed and talked to her.

After a few days the Milkwoman ceased to be suspicious of her, and became quite cordial.

Surya Bai's attendant then told how she had been the late Ranee's waiting-woman, and how the Rajah had thrown her into prison on her mistress's death; in return for which intelligence the old Milkwoman imparted to her how the wonderful mango had tumbled into her can as she slept under the tree, and how it had miraculously changed in the course of an hour into a beautiful little lady. "I wonder why she should have chosen my poor house to live in, instead of any one else's," said the old woman.

Then Surya Bai's attendant said, "Have you ever asked her her history? Perhaps she would not mind telling it to you now."

So the Milkwoman called the girl, and as soon as the old attendant saw her, she knew it was none other than Surya Bai, and her heart jumped for joy; but she remained silent, wondering much, for she knew her mistress had been drowned in the tank.

The old Milkwoman turned to Surya Bai and said, "My child, you have lived long with us, and been a good daughter to me; but I have never asked you your history, because I thought it must be a sad one; but if you do not fear to tell it to me now, I should like to hear it."

Surya Bai answered, "Mother, you speak true; my story is sad. I believe my real mother was a poor Milkwoman like you, and that she took me with her one day when I was quite a little baby, as she was going to sell milk in the bazaar. But being tired with the long walk, she sat down to rest, and placed me also on the ground, when suddenly a great Eagle flew down and carried me away. But all the father and mother I ever knew were the two great Eagles."

"Ah, my child! my child!" cried the Milkwoman, "I was that poor woman; the Eagles flew away with my eldest girl when she was only a year old. Have I found you after these many years?"

And she ran and called all her children, and her husband, to tell them the wonderful news.

And there was great rejoicing among them all.

When they were a little calmer, her mother said to Surya Bai, "Tell us, dear daughter, how your life has been spent since first we lost you." And Surya Bai went on:

"The old Eagles took me away to their home, and there I lived happily many years. They loved to bring me all the beautiful things they could find, and at last one day they both went to fetch me a diamond ring from the Red Sea; but while they were gone the fire went out in the nest: so I went to an old woman's hut, and got her to give me some fire; and next day (I don't know how it was), as I was opening the outer door of the cage, a sharp thing, that was sticking in it, ran into my hand and I fell down senseless.

"I don't know how long I lay there, but when I came to myself, I found the Eagles must have come back, and thought me dead, and gone away, for the diamond ring was on my little finger; a great many people were watching over me, and amongst them was a Rajah, who asked me to go home with him and be his wife, and he brought me to this place, and I was his Ranee.

"But his other wife, the first Ranee, hated me (for she was jealous), and desired to kill me; and one day she accomplished her purpose by pushing me into the tank, for I was young and foolish, and disregarded the warnings of my faithful old attendant, who begged me not to go near the place. Ah! if I had only listened to her words I might have been happy still."

At these words the old attendant, who had been sitting in the background, rushed forward and kissed Surya Bai's feet, crying, "Ah, my lady! my lady! have I found you at last!" and, without staying to hear more, she ran back to the palace to tell the Rajah the glad news.

Then Surya Bai told her parents how she had not wholly died in the tank, but become a sunflower; and how the first Ranee, seeing how fond the Rajah was of the plant, had caused it to be thrown away; and then how she had risen from the ashes of the sunflower, in the form of a mango tree; and how when the tree blossomed all her spirit went into the little mango flower, and she ended by saying: "And when the flower became fruit, I know not by what irresistible impulse I was induced to throw myself into your milk can. Mother — it was my destiny, and as soon as you took me into your house, I began to recover my human form."

"Why, then," asked her brothers and sisters, "why do you not tell the Rajah that you are living, and that you are the Ranee Surya Bai?"

"Alas," she answered, "I could not do that. Who knows but that he may be influenced by the first Ranee, and also desire my death. Let me rather be poor like you, but safe from danger."

Then her mother cried, "Oh, what a stupid woman I am! The Rajah one day came seeking you here, but I and your father and brothers drove him away, for we did not know you were indeed the lost Ranee."

As she spoke these words a sound of horses' hoofs was heard in the distance, and the Rajah himself appeared, having heard the good news of Surya Bai's return from her old attendant.

It is impossible to tell the joy of the Rajah at finding his long-lost wife, but it was not greater than Surya Bai's at being restored to her husband.

Then the Rajah turned to the old Milkwoman, and said "Old woman, you did not tell me true, for it was indeed my wife who was in your hut."

"Yes, Protector of the Poor," answered the old Milkwoman, "but it was also my daughter." Then they told him how Surya Bai was the Milkwoman's child.

At hearing this the Rajah commanded them all to return with him to the palace. He gave Surya Bai's father a village and, ennobled the family; and he said to Surya Bai's old attendant, "For the good service you have done you shall be palace housekeeper," and he gave her great riches; adding, "I can never repay the debt I owe you, nor make you sufficient recompense for having caused you to be unjustly cast into prison." But she replied, "Sire, even in your anger you were temperate; if you had caused me to be put to death, as some would have done, none of this good might have come upon you; it is yourself you have to thank."

The wicked first Ranee was cast, for the rest of her life, into the prison in which the old attendant had been thrown; but Surya Bai lived happily with her husband the rest of her days; and in memory of her adventures, he planted round their palace a hedge of sunflowers and a grove of mango trees.

The Storks and the Night Owl

CHASID, Caliph of Bagdad, which, by the way, is on the river Tigris, and was long, long ago the capital of the ancient Saracen Empire, was comfortably seated upon his sofa one beautiful afternoon. He had slept a little, for it was a very hot day, and he seemed cheerful after his nap.

He smoked from a long pipe made of rosewood; sipped now and then a little coffee, which a slave poured out for him, and stroked his beard very contentedly. So it was very plain that the Caliph was in a good humour. This was generally the case at this hour, as it was the custom of his Grand Vizier Manzor to visit him every day about this time. He came this afternoon, but he seemed very thoughtful. The Caliph looked at him, and said: "Grand Vizier, why is thy countenance so sad?"

The Grand Vizier crossed his arms over his breast, bowed himself before his lord, and said: "My lord, I am sad because in the court below there is a merchant who has such fine wares that I am troubled because I have so little money to spare to purchase them."

The Caliph, who had for a long time past desired to confer a favour upon his Grand Vizier, sent his black slave to bring up the merchant. The slave soon returned with him. The merchant was a short stout man, with a dark brown face, and in ragged attire. He carried a chest, in which he had various kinds of wares, pearls and rings, richly inlaid pistols, goblets and combs. The Caliph and his Vizier looked at them, and the former purchased some beautiful pistols for himself and Manzor. As the merchant was about to pack up his chest the Caliph saw a small drawer, and asked what it contained. The merchant drew out the drawer, and showed therein a box filled with blackish powder and a paper with strange writing upon it, which neither the Caliph nor Manzor could read. "I received these things from a merchant who found them in the streets of Mecca," said he. "I know not what they contain. They are at your service for a trifling price, for I can do nothing with them."

The Caliph, who was a great collector of old manuscripts for his library, even if he could not read them, purchased box and writings, and dismissed the merchant. But it occurred to the Caliph that he would like to know the meaning of the writing, and he asked the Vizier whether he knew anyone who could read it.

"Most worthy lord and master," replied the Vizier, "near the great Mosque there dwells a man who understands all languages; he is called 'Selim the Wise.' Send for him; perhaps he may be able to interpret the writing."

The learned Selim was soon brought. "Selim," said the Caliph, "they say thou art very learned; peep now into this writing, and see if thou canst read it. If thou canst, thou shalt have a rich new garment; if thou canst not, thou shalt be beaten with five-and-twenty strokes upon the soles of thy feet, for in that case thou art without the right to be called 'Selim the Wise.'"

Selim bowed himself and said: "Thy will be done, my lord." For a long time he examined the writing, then suddenly exclaimed, "This is Latin, my lord."

"Say what it means," commanded the Caliph, "if it be Latin."

Selim commenced to translate the documents. "Oh man, thou who findest this, praise Allah for His great goodness to thee. Whoever snuffs of the powder contained in this box, and says thereupon 'Mutabor,' will have the power to change himself into any animal he may choose, and will be able to understand the language of that animal and all others. Should he wish to return to his human form he must bow himself three times to the East, and in the direction of our holy Mecca, and repeat the same word. But beware, when thou art transformed that thou laughest not, otherwise the magic word will disappear completely from thy memory and thou wilt remain a beast."

When Selim the Wise had read this, the Caliph was delighted beyond measure. He bound over the sage that he would disclose the secret to no one, presented him with the promised rich garment, and dismissed him. But to his Grand Vizier he said: "That I call a good purchase, Manzor. I can scarcely restrain my delight until I am a beast. Early to-morrow morning come thou hither; we will go together into the field, snuff a little out of the box, and then listen to what is said in the air, and in the water, in the wood, and in the field."

On the following morning the Caliph had scarcely breakfasted when the Grand Vizier appeared to accompany him upon his walk, as he had commanded him. The Caliph placed the box with the magic powder in his girdle, and, having directed his train to remain behind, he set out alone with his Grand Vizier. They went through the spacious gardens of the Caliph, and looked around, but in vain, for some living thing, that they might try their trick. The Vizier at length proposed that they should go further on, to a pond where he had often seen many of those beautiful creatures called Storks, which, by their grave appearance and their continual clacking, had always excited his attention.

The Caliph approved the proposal of the Vizier, and they went together to the pond. When they had arrived they saw a stork walking gravely up and down looking for frogs, and now and then clacking something to himself. At the same time they saw also, far above in the air, another stork hovering over the pond.

"I am pretty sure," said the Grand Vizier, "that these two long-legged fellows are carrying on a fine conversation with each other. What if we should become storks?"

"Well said!" replied the Caliph. "But first let us consider, once more, how we are to become men again. True! three times must we bend toward the East and in the direction of Mecca, and say 'Mutabor,' then I am Caliph again and thou Vizier. But we must take care whatever we do, not to laugh, or we are lost."

While the Caliph was thus speaking he saw the other stork hover over their heads and slowly descend toward the earth.

He drew the box quickly from his girdle, took a good pinch, offered it to the Grand Vizier, who also snuffed it, and both cried out "Mutabor!"

At once their legs began to shrivel up, and soon became thin and red. The beautiful yellow slippers of the Caliph and of his companion were changed into the strange-shaped feet of the stork; their arms were changed to wings; their necks were lengthened out from their shoulders and became a yard long; their beards had disappeared, and their bodies were covered with feathers which were soft, fine and graceful.

"You have a beautiful beak," said the Caliph after a long pause of astonishment. "By the beard of the Prophet, I have never seen anything like it in my life."

"I thank you most humbly," replied the Grand Vizier, while he made his obeisance. "But if it were permitted I might say that your Highness looks even more handsome as a stork than as a Caliph. But come, if it please you, let us listen to our comrades yonder, and find out whether we really understand the language of the storks."

In the meanwhile the other stork had reached the ground. He trimmed his feet with his beak, put his feathers in order, and advanced to his companion. The two new storks hastened to get near them, and to their great surprise heard the following conversation:—

"Good morning, Lady Longlegs, already so early in the meadow."

"Thank you, dear Clatterbeak, I have had only a slight breakfast."

"Would you like, perhaps, a piece of a duck or the leg of a frog?"

"Much obliged, but I have no appetite to-day. I have come into the meadow for a very different purpose. I am to dance to-day before some guests of my father's, and I wish to practise here a little quietly by myself."

The young stork immediately jumped about the field with singular motions. The Caliph and Manzor looked on with wonder; but as she stood in a picturesque attitude upon one foot, and fluttered her wings gracefully, they could no longer contain themselves — an irresistible laughter burst forth from their beaks, from which they could not recover themselves for a long time. The Caliph first collected himself. "That was a joke now," he exclaimed, "that is not to be purchased with gold. Pity that the foolish creatures have been frightened away by our laughter, otherwise perhaps they might even have sung!"

But it now occurred to the Grand Vizier that laughter had been specially forbidden them during their transformation. He told his anxiety to the Caliph. "Dear me, dear me, it would indeed be a sorrowful joke if I must remain a stork. Pray bethink thyself of the magic word. For the life of me I can't remember it."

"Three times must we bow to the East and to Mecca, and then say, 'Mu, mu, mu.'"

They turned toward the East, and bowed and bowed, so that their beaks almost touched the earth. But alas! alas! the magic word would not come. However often the Caliph bowed himself and however anxiously the Vizier called out "Mu, mu," all recollection of it had vanished, and the poor Caliph and Vizier remained storks.

Very mournfully did the enchanted ones wander through the fields. They knew not what to do in their great distress. They could not rid themselves of their storks' skin and feathers; they could not return to the city to make themselves known, for who would have believed a stork, if he had said he was the Caliph? And even if they should believe it, the inhabitants of Bagdad would not have a stork for their Caliph. Thus they wandered about for several days, and nourished themselves with the fruits of the field, which they could not eat very conveniently on account of their long beaks. For ducks and frogs they had no appetite: they were afraid that with such food they might fatally disorder their stomachs. It was their only pleasure in this sad condition that they could fly, and so they often flew upon the roofs of Bagdad to see what passed in the city.

During the first days they observed great disorder and mourning in the streets, but about the fourth day after their transformation, as they stood upon the Caliph's palace, they saw in the street a splendid procession. Drums and fifes sounded; a man in a scarlet mantle, embroidered with gold, rode a richly caparisoned steed, surrounded by a brilliant train of attendants.

Half Bagdad leaped to meet him, and all cried: "Hail, Mirza, Lord of Bagdad!" The two storks upon the roof of the palace looked at each other, and the Caliph said: "Canst thou now divine, Grand Vizier, why I am enchanted? This Mirza is the son of my deadly enemy, the mighty magician Cachnur, who, in an evil hour, swore revenge upon me. But still I will not give up hope. Come with me, thou true companion of my misfortune! We will wander to the grave of the Prophet. Perhaps on that holy spot this spell will vanish;" and they at once soared from the roof of the palace and flew toward Mecca.

But flying was no easy matter to them, for the two storks had as yet but little practice. "Oh, my lord," sighed the Grand Vizier, after a few hours, "with your permission I must stop, for I can bear it no longer; you fly altogether too fast. Besides it is now evening, and we should do well to seek a shelter for the night." Chasid at once yielded to the prayer of the Vizier, and, as they at this moment perceived a ruin in the valley below, they flew thither. The place in which they had taken refuge for the night seemed formerly to have been a castle. Beautiful columns overtopped the ruins, and several chambers, which were still in a fair state of preservation, gave evidence of the former splendour of the building. Chasid and his companion wandered through the passages to find a dry spot for themselves. Suddenly the stork Manzor stopped. "My Lord and master," he whispered softly, "if it were not folly in a Grand Vizier, and still more in a stork, to be afraid of spirits, I should feel much alarmed, for something near by us sighed and groaned very plainly."

The Caliph also stood still, and heard very distinctly a low weeping that seemed rather to come from a human being than from an animal.

Full of expectation, he was about to advance toward the place from whence came the sounds of weeping and sighing, when the Vizier seized him by the wing with his beak and begged him very earnestly not to plunge into new and unknown dangers. But in vain! The Caliph, who bore a brave heart under his stork's wing, tore himself loose, with the loss of some of his feathers, and hastened into a dark passage-way. He soon arrived at a door which seemed to be partly open, and through which he overheard distinct sighs, with a slight moaning. In the ruined chamber, which was but dimly lighted by a small grated window, he saw a large night owl upon the floor. Big tears rolled from her large round eyes, and with a hoarse voice she sent forth her cries from her curved beak. As soon, however, as she saw the Caliph and Vizier she gave a loud scream of joy. Gracefully she wiped the tears from her eyes with her brown-spotted wing, and to the great astonishment of both she exclaimed, in good plain Arabic, "Welcome, ye storks! Ye are a good sign of my rescue, for it has been told me that by a stork I shall attain to great happiness."

When the Caliph had recovered from his astonishment he bowed with his long neck, brought his thin feet into a handsome position, and said:

"Night owl, from thy words I think that thou art a companion in suffering. But alas! the hope that thou wilt be rescued by us is vain. Thou wilt see our helplessness when we have told thee our history."

The night owl begged him to relate it. The Caliph commenced, and repeated what we already know.

When the Caliph had told the owl his history she thanked him and said:

"Hear also my story, and you will see that I am not less unhappy than you. My father is King of India; I, his only daughter, am called Lusa. That magician Cachnur, who has enchanted you, has also plunged me into this misery. He came one day to my father, and desired me for a wife to his son. But my father, who is a quick-tempered man, ordered him to be pushed down the stairs. The bad man contrived to meet me under another form; and once, when taking refreshments in my garden, he brought me, in the person of a slave, a draught in a cup, which changed me into this frightful shape. Powerless from fright, he brought me hither and cried in my ear: 'Here shalt thou remain, hated and despised, even by the beasts, until thy death, or until someone, with free will, shall desire thee for his wife, even in this horrible shape. In this way I revenge myself upon thee and thy proud father!'

"Since then many months have passed. Solitary and disconsolate, I dwell within these walls, scorned by the world, a horror even to the beasts. Beautiful nature is locked up from me, for, like all owls, I am blind by day, and only when the moon pours her pale light over these ruins does the veil fall from my eyes."

The owl stopped speaking and wiped the tears again from her eyes, for the telling of her sorrows had drawn them forth anew.

During the story of the Princess, the Caliph appeared deep in thought. "If everything does not deceive me," he said, "there is a secret connection between our fates; but where can I find the key to this riddle?"

The owl replied: "Oh, my lord, I also have such a thought, for it was once told me when I was a very little girl that a stork would one day bring me great happiness, and I may know perhaps how we may be rescued."

The Caliph was much astonished, and asked her in what way she meant.

"The magician who has made us both miserable," said she, "comes once in every month to these ruins. Not far from this chamber is a hall. There he is accustomed to feast with many of his companions. I have often listened there already. They tell one another their histories, and what they have been doing since last they met. Perhaps on the next occasion they may talk over your story, and let fall the magic word that you have forgotten."

"Oh, dearest Princess," exclaimed the Caliph, "tell me when does he come and where is the hall?"

The owl was silent for a moment and then spoke. "Take it not ungraciously, but only upon one condition can your wish be granted."

"Speak out! speak out!" cried the Caliph. "Command, and whatever it is I will obey?"

"It is this: I also would gladly be free, and this can only happen if one of you offer me his hand." The storks seemed somewhat confused at this proposition, and the Caliph made a sign to his follower to withdraw for a moment with him.

They talked together for a long time, the Caliph urging the Vizier to consent; but he said it was not possible, as he was already an old man, "whilst you, my lord and master, are but young in years." The Caliph at last saw that the Vizier would rather remain a stork than accept the owl, so he resolved to fulfil the condition himself. The owl was overjoyed, and she said they could not have come at a better time, for the magicians would most likely meet that very night.

She then left the chamber in company with the storks, in order to lead them to the hall. They walked for a long time through a dark passage-way, when at last a bright light shone upon them from an opening in a ruined wall. When they had arrived thither the owl advised them to keep perfectly quiet. From the opening near where they stood they had a good view of the hall. It had many pillars, and the whole apartment was richly decorated. In the middle was a round table covered with rich food of various kinds; round the table were placed seats, upon which sat eight men. In one of these men the storks recognized the merchant who had sold them the magic powder. The one who sat next him desired him to relate his history and what had been done during the last few days. He did so, and among the other things he told the story of his visit to the Caliph and Grand Vizier of Bagdad.

"What kind of a word hast thou given them," asked the other magician.

"A very hard Latin one; it is Mutabor."

As the storks heard this from their place of concealment they became almost beside themselves for joy. They ran so quickly with their long legs to the door of the ruin that the owl could scarcely follow them. There, the Caliph addressed the owl with much emotion.

"Saviour of my life, and the life of my friend, as an eternal thanks for what thou hast done for us, accept me as thy husband"; then he turned himself toward the east and toward Mecca. Three times the storks bent their long necks toward the sun, which, by this time, was rising above the distant hills: "Mutabor!" they exclaimed. In a twinkling they were changed, and in the delight of newly restored life, master and servant were laughing and weeping in each other's arms. But who can describe their astonishment as they looked about them?

A beautiful maiden in a splendid dress stood before them. She held out her hand to the Caliph saying: "Do you no longer recognize your night owl?"

Yes, it was indeed that bird. The Caliph looked with wonder at her beauty and grace, and said: "It is my greatest happiness that I have been a stork."

The three now started to travel together for the city of Bagdad. The Caliph found in his clothes not only the box with the magic powder, but also his purse of gold. By this means he purchased at the nearest village all that was necessary for their journey, so that they very soon arrived at the gates of Bagdad. The arrival of the Caliph excited the greatest wonder. They had supposed him dead, but the people were overjoyed to have their beloved lord again.

Their hatred was intense against the deceiver Mirza. They entered the palace and took the old magician and his son prisoners. The Caliph took the old man to that same chamber in which the Princess had lived so long as an owl, and ordered him to be hung up there. But to the son, who did not understand the wicked arts of his father, he offered the choice of either to die or take snuff.

He chose the latter when the Grand Vizier offered the box. A good pinch, and the magic word of the Caliph changed him into a stork. The Caliph then directed that he should be put into a cage and placed in his garden.

Long and happily the Caliph Chasid lived with his wife, the

Princess. His happiest hours were when the Grand Vizier visited him in the afternoon. They never tired of talking about their storks' adventure, and when the Caliph was more than usually merry he would imitate the Grand Vizier, and show how he looked when he was a stork. He walked gravely up and down the chamber with slow and solemn steps, made a clacking noise, flapped his arms like wings, and showed how he, to no purpose, bowed himself to the east and called out: "Mu — Mu — Mu." This was always a great delight to the Princess and the children, which were afterward born to her, until they also took delight in calling out to one another: "Mu — Mu — Mu."

So for very many years happiness reigned in the palace, and not only in the palace, but throughout the city of Bagdad, the capital of the ancient Saracen Empire.

The Five Queer Brothers

AN OLD woman had five grown-up sons that looked just alike. The eldest could gulp up the ocean at a mouthful; the second was hard enough to nick steel; the third had extensible legs; the fourth was unaffected by fire; the fifth lived without breathing. They all concealed their peculiar traits, and their neighbours did not even guess that they were queer.

The eldest supported the family by fishing, going alone to the sea, and bringing back loads of spoil. The neighbours often besought him to teach their sons how to fish, and he at last let all their boys go with him, one day, to learn his art. On reaching the shore, he sucked the sea into his mouth, and directed the boys to the dry bottom, to collect the fish. When he was tired of holding the water, he beckoned to the boys to return, but they were playing amongst strange objects, and paid no heed to him. When he could contain the sea no longer, he had to let it flow back into its former basin, and all the boys were drowned.

As he went homeward, he passed the doors of the parents, who inquired how many fish their sons had caught, and how long they would be in coming back. He told them the facts, yet they would not excuse him, and they dragged him before the magistrate to account for the loss of their children. He defended himself by saying that he had not invited the boys to go with him, and had consented to their going only when the parents had repeatedly urged him; that, after the boys were on the ocean-bed, he had done his utmost to induce them to come ashore; that he had held the water as long as he could, and had then thrown it in the sea-basin solely because nothing else would contain it. Notwithstanding this defence, the judge decided that, since he took the boys away and did not bring them back, he was guilty of murder, and sentenced him to decapitation. He entreated leave to pay one visit to his aged mother before his execution, and this was granted. He went alone and told his brothers of his doom, and the second brother returned in his stead to the judge, thanked him for having given him permission to perform a duty required by filial piety, and said he was then ready to die. He knelt with bowed head, and the headsman brought the knife down across the back of his neck, but the knife was nicked and the neck was left unscathed. A second knife, and a third of finer steel, were brought and tried by headsmen who were accustomed to sever heads clean off at one stroke. Having spoiled their best blades without marring his neck, they took him back to prison and informed the judge that the sentence could not be executed.

The judge then decreed that he should be dropped into the sea which covered his victims. When he heard this decision, he said that he had taken leave of his mother supposing that his head was to be cut off, and that, if he was to be drowned, he must go to her and make known his fate, and get her blessing anew. Permission being given, he went and told his brothers what had happened, and the third brother took the place of the second, and presented himself before the judge as the criminal that was to be sunk in the sea. He was carried far from shore and thrown overboard, but he stretched his legs till his feet touched bottom and he stood with his head in the air. They hauled him aboard and took him farther from land, but still his extensible legs supported him above the waters. Then they sailed to mid-ocean, and cast him into its greatest depths, but his legs still lengthened so that he was not drowned. They brought him back to the judge, reported what had been done, and said that some other method of destroying him must be followed.

He was then condemned to death by being boiled in oil; and while the caldron was being heated, he begged and obtained leave to go and tell his mother of his late survival, and, of the manner in which he was soon to be taken off. His brothers having heard the latest judgment, the fourth one went to bear the penalty of the law, and was lowered into the kettle of boiling oil, where he disported himself as if in a tepid bath, and even asked the executioners to stir up the fire a little to increase the warmth. Finding that he could not be fried, he was remanded to prison.

Then the populace, the bereaved parents, and the magistrate joined in effort to invent a sure method of putting him to death. Water, fire and sword all having failed, they finally fixed upon smothering him in a vast cream-cake. The whole country round made contributions of flour for the tough pastry, sugar for the viscid filling, and bricks for a huge oven; and it was made and baked on a plain outside the city walls. Meanwhile the prisoner was allowed to go and bid his mother farewell, and the fifth brother secretly became his substitute. When the cake was done, a multitude of people, with oxen, horses, and ropes, dragged it to the execution ground, and within it the culprit was interred. As he was able to exist without air, he rested peacefully till the next midnight. Then he safely crawled forth, and returned to his home, where he dwelt happily for many years with his remarkable brothers.

The Lac of Rupees

A POOR blind Brahman and his wife were dependent on their son for their subsistence. Every day the young fellow used to go out and get what he could by begging. This continued for some time, till at last he became quite tired of such a wretched life, and determined to go and try his luck in another country. He informed his wife of his intention, and ordered her to manage somehow or other for the old people during the few months that he would be absent. He begged her to be industrious, lest his parents should be angry and curse him.

One morning he started with some food in a bundle, and walked on day after day, till he reached the chief city of the neighbouring country. Here he went and sat down by a merchant's shop and asked alms. The merchant inquired whence he had come, why he had come, and what was his caste; to which he replied that he was a Brahman, and was wandering hither and thither begging a livelihood for himself, his wife and parents. Moved with pity for the man, the merchant advised him to visit the kind and generous king of that country, and offered to accompany him to the court. Now, at that time it happened that the king was seeking for a Brahman to look after a golden temple which he had just had built. His Majesty was very glad, therefore, when he saw the Brahman and heard that he was good and honest. He at once deputed him to the charge of this temple, and ordered fifty kharwars of rice and one hundred rupees to be paid to him every year as wages.

Two months after this, the Brahman's wife, not having heard any news of her husband, left the house and went in quest of him. By a happy fate she arrived at the very place that he had reached, where she heard that every morning at the golden temple a golden rupee was given in the king's name to any beggar who chose to go for it. Accordingly, on the following morning she went to the place and met her husband.

"Why have you come here?" he asked. "Why have you left my parents? Care you not whether they curse me and I die? Go back immediately, and await my return."

"No, no," said the woman. "I cannot go back to starve and see your old father and mother die. There is not a grain of rice left in the house."

"O Bhagawant!" exclaimed the Brahman. "Here, take this," he continued, scribbling a few lines on some paper, and then handing it to her, "and give it to the king. You will see that he will give you a lac of rupees for it." Thus saying he dismissed her, and the woman left.

On this scrap of paper were written three pieces of advice — First, If a person is travelling and reaches any strange place at night, let him be careful where he puts up, and not close his eyes in sleep, lest he close them in death. Secondly, If a man has a married sister, and visits her in great pomp, she will receive him for the sake of what she can obtain from him; but if he comes to her in poverty, she will frown on him and disown him. Thirdly, If a man has to do any work, he must do it himself, and do it with might and without fear.

On reaching her home the Brahmani told her parents of her meeting with her husband, and what a valuable piece of paper he had given her; but not liking to go before the king herself, she sent one of her relations. The king read the paper, and ordering the man to be flogged, dismissed him. The next morning the Brahmani took the paper, and while she was going along the road to the darbar reading it, the king's son met her, and asked what she was reading, whereupon she replied that she held in her hands a paper containing certain bits of advice, for which she wanted a lac of rupees. The prince asked her to show it to him, and when he had read it gave her a parwana for the amount, and rode on. The poor Brahmani was very thankful. That day she laid in a great store of provisions, sufficient to last them all for a long time.

In the evening the prince related to his father the meeting with the woman, and the purchase of the piece of paper. He thought his father would applaud the act. But it was not so. The king was more angry than before, and banished his son from the country.

So the prince bade adieu to his mother and relations and friends, and rode off on his horse, whither he did not know. At nightfall he arrived at some place, where a man met him, and invited him to lodge at his house. The prince accepted the invitation, and was treated like a prince. Matting was spread for him to squat on, and the best provisions set before him.

"Ah!" thought he, as he lay down to rest, "here is a case for the first piece of advice that the Brahmani gave me. I will not sleep to-night."

It was well that he thus resolved, for in the middle of the night the man rose up, and taking a sword in his hand, rushed to the prince with the intention of killing him. But the prince arose and spoke.

"Do not slay me," he said. "What profit would you get from my death? If you killed me you would be sorry afterward like that man who killed his dog."

"What man? What dog?" he asked.

"I will tell you," said the prince, "if you will give me that sword."

So he gave him the sword, and the prince began his story:

"Once upon a time there lived a wealthy merchant who had a pet dog. He was suddenly reduced to poverty, and had to part with his dog. He got a loan of five thousand rupees from a brother merchant, leaving the dog as a pledge, and with the money began business again. Not long after this the other merchant's shop was broken into by thieves and completely sacked. There was hardly ten rupees' worth left in the place. The faithful dog, however, knew what was going on, and went and followed the thieves, and saw where they deposited the things, and then returned.

"In the morning there was great weeping and lamentation in the merchant's house when it was known what had happened.

The merchant himself nearly went mad. Meanwhile the dog kept on running to the door, and pulling at his master's shirt and pajamas, as though wishing him to go outside. At last a friend suggested that, perhaps, the dog knew something of the whereabouts of the things, and advised the merchant to follow its leadings. The merchant consented, and went after the dog right up to the very place where the thieves had hidden the goods. Here the animal scraped and barked, and showed in various ways that the things were underneath. So the merchant and his friends dug about the place, and soon came upon all the stolen property. Nothing was missing. There were all the articles just as the thieves had taken them.

"The merchant was very glad. On returning to his house, he at once sent the dog back to its old master with a letter rolled under the collar, wherein he had written about the sagacity of the beast, and begged his friend to forget the loan and to accept another five thousand rupees as a present. When this merchant saw his dog coming back again, he thought, 'Alas! my friend is wanting the money. How can I pay him? I have not had sufficient time to recover myself from my recent losses. I will slay the dog ere he reaches the threshold, and say that another must have slain it. Thus there will be an end of my debt. No dog, no loan.' Accordingly he ran out and killed the poor dog, when the letter fell out of its collar. The merchant picked it up and read it. How great was his grief and disappointment when he knew the facts of the case!

"Beware," continued the prince, "lest you do that which afterward you would give your life not to have done."

By the time the prince had concluded this story it was nearly morning, and he went away, after rewarding the man.

The prince then visited the country belonging to his brother-in-law. He disguised himself as a jogi, and sitting down by a tree near the palace, pretended to be absorbed in worship. News of the man and of his wonderful piety reached the ears of the king. He felt interested in him, as his wife was very ill; and he had sought for hakims to cure her, but in vain. He thought that, perhaps, this holy man could do something for her. So he sent to him. But the jogi refused to tread the halls of a king, saying that his dwelling was the open air, and that if his Majesty wished to see him he must come himself and bring his wife to the place. Then the king took his wife and brought her to the jogi. The holy man bade her prostrate herself before him, and when she had remained in this position for about three hours, he told her to rise and go, for she was cured.

In the evening there was great consternation in the palace, because the queen had lost her pearl rosary, and nobody knew anything about it. At length some one went to the jogi, and found it on the ground by the place where the queen had prostrated herself. When the king heard this he was very angry and ordered the jogi to be executed. This stern order, however, was not carried out, as the prince bribed the men and escaped from the country. But he knew that the second bit of advice was true.

Clad in his own clothes, the prince was walking along one day when he saw a potter crying and laughing, alternately, with his wife and children. "O fool," said he, "what is the matter? If you laugh, why do you weep? If you weep, why do you laugh?"

"Do not bother me," said the potter. "What does it matter to you?"

"Pardon me," said the prince, "but I should like to know the reason."

"The reason is this, then," said the potter. "The king of this country has a daughter whom he is obliged to marry every day, because all her husbands die the first night of their stay with her. Nearly all the young men of the place have thus perished, and our son will be called on soon. We laugh at the absurdity of the thing — a potter's son marrying a princess, and we cry at the terrible consequence of the marriage. What can we do?"

"Truly a matter for laughing and weeping. But weep no more," said the prince. "I will exchange places with your son, and will be married to the princess instead of him. Only give me suitable garments, and prepare me for the occasion."

So the potter gave him beautiful raiment and ornaments, and the prince went to the palace. At night he was conducted to the apartment of the princess. "Dread hour!" thought he; "am I to die like the scores of young men before me?" He clenched his sword with firm grip, and lay down on his bed, intending to keep awake all the night and see what would happen. In the middle of the night he saw two Shahmars come out from the nostrils of the princess. They stole over toward him, intending to kill him, like the others who had been before him; but he was ready for them. He laid hold of his sword, and when the snakes reached his bed he struck at them and killed them. In the morning the king came as usual to inquire, and was surprised to hear his daughter and the prince talking gaily together. "Surely," said he, "this man must be her husband, as he only can live with her."

"Where do you come from? Who are you?" asked the king, entering the room.

"Oh king!" replied the prince, "I am the son of a king who rules over such-and-such a country."

When he heard this the king was very glad, and bade the prince to abide in his palace, and appointed him his successor to the throne. The prince remained at the palace for more than a year, and then asked permission to visit his own country, which was granted. The king gave him elephants, horses, jewels, and abundance of money for the expenses of the way and as presents for his father, and the prince started.

On the way he had to pass through the country belonging to his brother-in-law, whom we have already mentioned. Report of his arrival reached the ears of the king, who came with rope-tied hands and haltered neck to do him homage. He most humbly begged him to stay at his palace, and to accept what little hospitality could be provided. While the prince was staying at the palace he saw his sister, who greeted him with smiles and kisses. On leaving he told her how she and her husband had treated him at his first visit, and how he escaped; and then gave them two elephants, two beautiful horses, fifteen soldiers, and ten lacs of rupees' worth of jewels.

Afterward he went to his own home, and informed his mother and father of his arrival. Alas! his parents had both become blind from weeping about the loss of their son. "Let him come in," said the king, "and put his hands upon our eyes, and we shall see again." So the prince entered, and was most affectionately greeted by his old parents; and he laid his hands on their eyes, and they saw again.

Then the prince told his father all that had happened to him, and how he had been saved several times by attending to the advice that he had purchased from the Brahmani. Whereupon the king expressed his sorrow for having sent him away, and all was joy and peace again.

The Emperor's Nightingale

CHINA, as you know, is ruled over by an Emperor, who is a Chinaman, and all his courtiers are Chinamen, too. Now, this little story that I am going to tell you happened ever so long ago, and that is why you ought to hear it now, before it is forgotten, for it is well worth hearing.

The Emperor lived in the most beautiful palace in the world and it was a very costly one, for it was made of the finest porcelain, and was so brittle that you had to be very careful if you touched it. It was surrounded by such a large garden that the gardener himself did not quite know where it ended. Lovely flowers grew in luxuriance, and, lest people should pass the most beautiful without noticing them, peals of silver bells were tied to their stems.

Truly, everything was carefully planned in the Emperor's garden. If you kept on far enough, you came to a mighty forest which stretched down so close to the margin of the sea that the poor fishermen in their boats could sail under the overhanging branches.

In one of these boughs a nightingale lived, and so beautiful was its song that the rough sailors would stop to listen on their way out to spread their nets.

"Ah, what beautiful music!" they would exclaim, and then they had to sail on, for they had their work to do. And again, when nightfall came, and the bird sang, and the boats came drifting home on the tide, they would say:

"Heavens! how gloriously that bird sings!"

Travellers came from all over the world to see the Emperor's city and his palace and garden; but when they heard the Nightingale, they would say:

"That is most beautiful of all."

And when the travellers reached their homes again, they told all their friends of the wonderful things they had seen and heard; and wise people wrote books, in which they did not forget to tell of the Nightingale, which was pronounced the loveliest among many lovely things. Even the poets wrote verses about this Nightingale that lived in the wood by the sea.

And then, one by one, the books travelled over the world, until some at last reached the hands of the Emperor, who sat in his golden chair and read them, nodding his head with pleasure; for he was charmed with the beautiful descriptions of his city and castle and garden. Then he read the words:

"The Nightingale is the most lovely thing of all!"

"What is this?" he said. "The Nightingale! I have never heard of such a bird, yet there seems to be one in my empire — and in my own garden! Imagine learning of such a thing for the first time from a book!"

Thereupon he summoned his Chamberlain, who was a very important person, and who never replied more than "Paugh!" to any inferior who dared to ask him anything. This, of course, was no answer at all.

"This book tells of a very remarkable bird called a Nightingale," said the Emperor. "They say it is the finest thing in my empire. Why has no one told me about it before?"

"I have never heard anyone mention it before, myself," replied the Chamberlain. "I don't remember that it has ever been presented at Court."

"I command it to appear at Court and sing before me tonight," said the Emperor. "All the world knows what I possess, it appears, except myself."

"I have never heard of such a thing before," answered the Chamberlain again, "but I will search until it is found."

But where was it? The Chamberlain searched up and down the palace, through corridors and up staircases, but he could not find anyone who had even heard of a nightingale. Then he hastened back to the Emperor to say that it must certainly be an invention of the man who had written the book.

"Your Imperial Majesty will scarcely credit the sort of things these people will write," he said. "It is all fiction and something called Black Art."

"But the great and mighty Mikado of Japan has sent me this book!" shouted the Emperor, very much annoyed, "and, therefore, there cannot be anything that is false in it. I must and shall hear the Nightingale, and I command it to be present this evening. It has my especial Royal favour, and if it is not here, the whole Court shall be trampled upon by camels after supper."

"Tching Pe!" exclaimed the Chamberlain, very much alarmed, and raced up and down stairs and through all the corridors again, accompanied now by half the Court, who were not at all anxious to be trampled upon, even after supper. It was a great search after this wonderful Nightingale, of which all the world had heard, except the Emperor and his courtiers.

At length they came to the kitchen, where a poor little scullery-maid at once exclaimed:

"Why, yes, I know it well; and it sings beautifully! Every evening I have permission to take the kitchen scraps to my sick mother, who lives down on the seashore, and often, as I come back, I rest in the wood and listen to the Nightingale. Its song makes my eyes fill with tears, and I seem to be able to feel my mother's kisses."

"Little girl," the Chamberlain said, "if you will take us straight to where the Nightingale lives you shall receive a high appointment in the Royal kitchen, and be allowed to see the Emperor dine every night. His Majesty has commanded it to sing before him this evening."

So the girl led the Chamberlain and all the Court to the wood where the Nightingale sang. When they were half-way there a cow began to low.

"Hark!" said all the courtiers. "What a beautiful note, and how powerful for such a tiny creature! I have certainly heard it before."

"No," said the maid, "that is only the lowing of a cow. We have a long way to go yet."

"Oh, how exquisite!" murmured the Chinese Court-chaplain, as he heard the frogs croaking in a marsh. "Now I can hear it; why, it resembles the chime of silver bells."

"No, those are only the marsh frogs," said the little maid. "But we shall soon be able to hear it now." And then, just as she spoke, the Nightingale commenced to sing.

"Ah, now!" said the girl. "Listen, listen! There it sits up in the branches," and she pointed to a tiny gray bird clinging to a spray of thorn.

"I should never have believed it would look like that," exclaimed the Chamberlain. "It looks so simple and so pale; it must be frightened at the sight of so many grand people."

"Dear Nightingale," called the little girl, "our most noble Emperor desires you to sing to him."

"Oh, certainly, with pleasure," replied the Nightingale; and it sang so beautifully it was a treat to hear it.

"It is like the sound of running water; and see how its tiny throat quivers, too," the Chamberlain said. "How strange that we have never heard it talked about before! It will be an immense success at Court."

"Would the Emperor like to hear another song?" asked the bird, for it thought the Emperor had been listening all the time.

"Most worthy Nightingale," the Chamberlain replied, "it is with great pleasure I command you to appear before his Majesty at a Court reception to-night, when you will charm his Majesty with your delightful singing."

"It sounds so much more beautiful out in the wood," said the bird; but still it promised willingly when it heard it was the Emperor's royal desire.

The palace was very elegant in its decorations. The porcelain walls and floors glittered and shone with the reflection from many lamps. Beautiful flowers, shaking their silvery bells, were banked in rich profusion on each side of the great staircase. Indeed, what with the passing of many feet and the great draught, the bells tinkled so loudly you could hardly hear yourself speak.

The Emperor sat on a jewelled throne in the centre of the great hall, and close beside him stood a golden perch for the Nightingale. All the courtiers were assembled, and the little scullery-maid, now raised to the rank of a real Court cook, had received permission to listen behind the door. Everyone stood dressed in his very best and gazed on the little gray bird, to whom the mighty Emperor had just nodded his head.

Then the Nightingale began to sing, and sang so gloriously that the Emperor's eyes so filled with tears that they overflowed and ran down his cheeks. And the bird sang on and on, till it reached one's very heart. The Emperor was so delighted that he said the Nightingale should wear his own golden slipper around its neck. But the Nightingale thanked him very politely and said it had already received sufficient reward.

"For," it said, "I have caused the Emperor's eyes to fill with tears, and an Emperor's tears have a mighty power. Heaven knows I have been sufficiently repaid." And again it burst into its beautiful song.

"Oh, what charming coquetry!" said the Court ladies, and each tried to keep their mouths full of water so that they might gurgle like the Nightingale when they spoke to anyone. Even the footmen and the ladies' maids expressed their perfect satisfaction, and that was a great deal, for they are generally the hardest to please. In short, the Nightingale had scored a great success.

It was so arranged that in future it should live at Court, in its own cage, with permission to fly out twice a day, and once during the night.

On these trips it was accompanied by twelve servants, each of whom held a silken cord attached to its leg, so that really there could not be the slightest pleasure for it in such a flight. As for the city, wherever you went, you met people talking of the wonderful bird. One had only to say the word "Nightin" when the other would answer "gale," and each would give a sigh and feel they perfectly understood each other. Eleven babies belonging to poor people were christened after the bird, and yet not one of them could sing a note.

One day a parcel arrived at the palace, addressed to the Emperor, with the words,"The Nightingale," written on the outside.

"Oh, this must be a fresh book about our famous bird," said the Emperor.

But it was not a book. A wonderful work of art lay within a casket, a clockwork nightingale, encrusted in diamonds and rubies and pearls, and fashioned in the shape of a real bird. When it had been wound up it sang one of the same songs that the real nightingale sang, and its glittering tail moved up and down in time to the notes. A ribbon hung around its neck, and on it these words were written: "The Emperor of Japan's Nightingale is nothing compared to that of the Emperor of China."

"How perfect!" everyone cried, and the Emperor immediately bestowed the title of the King's-Imperial-Nightingale-Bringer on the courier who had brought the bird.

"Now we must hear them sing a duet together. How beautiful it will sound!" they all said. But it did not sound so well as they had expected, for the real bird sang in a natural way, and just whatever came into its little throat, and the artificial bird could only sing waltzes.

"The new one sings quite correctly," said the chief Court musician. "It keeps perfect time, and understands my own method, I can hear." So then the new one had to sing by itself and obtained quite as much applause as the real one had done. Besides, it looked so much handsomer; glittering and glistening like bracelets and breast-pins.

Over and over again, for quite thirty-three times, it sang the same tune and yet was not tired. The courtiers would have liked to hear it again even, only the Emperor said "No, it 's the real bird's turn now, let us ask it to sing."

But where was the Nightingale? Not a soul had seen it fly out of the open window back to its own green woods.

"Well, well! whatever has become of it?" exclaimed the Emperor. And all the courtiers united in saying it was a most ungrateful creature.

"After all," they said, "we still have the better bird," and with that the new one had to sing his song for the thirty-fourth time, and even then the courtiers had not caught the tune quite correctly, for it was very difficult and tricky. The Court musician, especially, praised the bird, and said, not only was its plumage much more handsome, but its inside was better made, too.

"For your Imperial Highness, and you, my noble lords and ladies, must see," he went on, "that with a real Nightingale you can never tell what is coming next, but with an imitation one everything is settled. One can open it and see exactly how it works, where the waltz comes from, and why the notes follow one after the other."

The courtiers all agreed with the Court musician, and the Emperor commanded him to show it to the people on the following Saturday, and let them hear it sing. This he did, and the Chinese people felt so pleased and happy they all nodded their heads and shook their forefingers and said "Ah!" Only the fishermen, who had heard the real bird sing, shook their heads and said it all sounded very nice, and very much alike, too; but somehow — they did n't quite know how — something seemed lacking.

And so the real Nightingale was sent into exile, and the imitation one slept on a satin cushion close to the Emperor's bed. All the jewels and precious stones that had been showered on it as presents were arranged around the edge of the cushion, and it was given the title of the Emperor's Own Court Singer and advanced to the very highest rank, that of First on the Left; for the left was thought to be the highest station, as the Emperor wore his heart on that side, just like ordinary people.

The Court musician wrote twenty-five volumes on the imitation bird. The work was very tedious and dull, and full of the longest Chinese words you can imagine; and people always said they had read it and pretended to have enjoyed it, or else they would have been thought stupid and have had their bodies trampled upon.

A whole year passed by in this fashion, and at last the Emperor and his Court and all the Chinese people knew every turn and trill of the Nightingale's song by heart, and this pleased them more than ever. They often sang with it, and the street-urchins, even, could sing "Tchoochoohuh juggjugg jugg," and the Emperor just the same. It was really delightful.

One evening the Emperor lay in his bed listening to the bird which was singing its very best. Suddenly it stopped with a jerk, and bang! something had snapped in its inside, and all its wheels ran down with a whirr, and then there was a dead silence.

The Emperor sprang out of bed and sent for the Court physician, but he could do nothing. Then a watchmaker was fetched in, and after he had talked a lot, and poked and examined the inside a great deal, he managed to put it in something like working order again.

"You must not use it too much," he said, "it is nearly worn out, and one can never put in fresh works again and be sure of the music being as good as before."

At this there was great mourning all over the country, for the imitation bird must only be allowed to sing once a year in future, and even that might prove too much for it.

And when these performances were given the Court musician made a short speech, full of very long words, proving that it sang as beautifully as ever, and so the Court thought it did and were very well content.

After five years had passed the Emperor fell very ill. All the people felt sad, for they were really extremely fond of him, and now it was said he could not possibly live. Already the new Emperor was selected, and the people stood about in the streets and begged to know from the Chamberlain how the old Emperor was.

But "Paugh!" was all he would say as he nodded his head.

White and cold the old Emperor lay in his great tall bed, and all the courtiers thought he was dead, and ran away to greet their new King. In the antechamber the pages gossiped with the maids-in-waiting as they ate a splendid tea. The palace was wrapped in silence, for carpets had been laid down in the hall and corridor, so that the noise of footsteps might be deadened. It was very, very still and solemn. And the Emperor, still alive, lay all cold and pale on the magnificent bed, with its heavy velvet draperies and gorgeous golden tassels. High up, through the open window, the moon shone in upon him and the imitation nightingale lying in its casket by the bed.

The poor old Emperor lay panting for breath; a terrible weight seemed pressing on his chest, and he opened his eyes at last to see Death sitting there, with the Emperor's crown upon his head and his sword and jewelled sceptre in his hands.

The Emperor's gaze travelled round, and he saw faces — some ugly and some smiling and gentle — peeping at him from among the velvet folds of the curtains; these were the Emperor's good and bad deeds looking down at him as Death pressed on his heart.

"Don't you remember this?" and "Can you recall that?" they all seemed to be whispering. And the cold sweat broke out on the Emperor's brow, at the recollections they brought to his mind.

"I do not remember — I cannot!" gasped the Emperor, then cried, "Music! music! Bring the great Chinese drum, that I may not hear what they say."

But still they whispered together, and Death nodded his head, like a Chinese mandarin, at all they said.

"Music, music, I say!" shrieked the old Emperor. "Oh, precious jewelled bird, sing! I heaped upon you gold and precious stones, and even hung my golden slippers around your neck. Ah, heavens! sing! I say, sing!"

But the imitation bird was still and silent, for until someone wound it up, it could not sing, and there was no one by to do it. And Death still sat gazing at him with hollow, hungry eyes, and all around was terribly still.

Suddenly a silvery note floated in at the open window. It was the voice of the real Nightingale as it sat upon a bough outside. It had heard the Emperor was ill, and had come back to comfort him and fill him with hope.

And as its song gained strength and rose and fell in delicious trills, the ghostly faces faded away and the warm life blood began to flow anew in the Emperor's veins. Even Death raised his head and said, "Go on, go on, little Nightingale."

"Ah, but you will give me the Emperor's royal crown and his sword and jewelled sceptre, if I do?" asked the bird.

And Death exchanged each of these treasures for a song, and the Nightingale went on singing — of a peaceful churchyard, heavy with the scent of roses and elder blossom, where the grass lay thick with the dew of many tears shed by mortals over dear ones lying sleeping there. Then Death was filled with a yearning to be in his own garden, and passed like a gray mist out of the open window.

"Deep, deep thanks I give you," said the Emperor. "Merciful little bird! I know you again. It was you I banished from my presence and my kingdom. And yet, you have charmed the evil spectres from my bed and Death from my heart. How can I ever repay you?"

"I am already rewarded in that I drew tears from your eyes when first I sang to you. Those tears were jewels to crown the heart of any singer, and I shall never forget them. I will sing you to sleep now, a sleep from which you will awake fresh and strong again."

And the Emperor fell into a sweet, refreshing slumber, so deep and peaceful that he awoke strong and well in the warm sunlight. None of the courtiers were by him, for all believed he was dead, only the Nightingale was still singing a gentle, sweet song.

"You must never leave me," the Emperor said; "you shall only sing when you desire, and I will break the artificial bird into a million pieces."

"No, spare it," said the Nightingale. "It did its best as long as it was able, so keep it as before. I cannot build my nest within the castle, but I will often come to you at evening and sing, on the bough outside the window, songs that will make you glad, and at the same time sweetly melancholy. I will sing of happiness and sorrow, of the goodness and wickedness that lie close around you. The singing bird loves the fisherman's hut, the peasant's cot, and all that is far removed from palace and court. But I love your soul more than your crown. I will fly to you and sing my songs, but you must promise me one thing."

The Emperor stood in his royal robes, which he had put on with his own hands, and he pressed his sword-hilt to his breast, as he said:

"Anything that I can, I will grant."

"I only ask of you this one thing. Do not let anyone know that you have a little bird that tells you all; it will be for the best."

So saying the Nightingale flew away.

Then the servants entered to attend to their dead Emperor, and when they saw him standing there strong and well, they started back aghast.

But the Emperor only said:

"Good morning!"

Hookedy-Crookedy

ONCE on a time there was a King and Queen in Ireland, and they had one son named Jack, and when Jack grew up to be man big, he rose up one day and said to his father and mother that he would go off and push his fortune.

All his father and mother could say to Jack, they could not keep him from going. So with his staff in his hand and his father's and mother's blessing on his head, off he started, and he travelled away far, farther than I could tell you, and twice as far as you could tell me. At length one day, coming up to a big wood, he met a gray-haired old man. The old man asked him, "Jack, where are you going?"

He says, "I am going to push my fortune."

"Well," says the old man, says he, "If 't is looking for service you are, there is a Giant who lives at the other side of that wood that they call the Giant of the Hundred Hills, and I believe he wants a fine strong, able, clever young fellow like you."

"Very well," says Jack, "I will push on to him."

Push on Jack did, away through the wood, until he got to the other side, and then he saw a big castle, and going up he knocked at the door, and a big Giant came out.

"Welcome, Jack," says he, "the King of Ireland's Son! Where are you going and what do you want?"

"I come," says Jack, "to push my fortune, and am looking for honest service. I have been told," he says to the Giant of the Hundred Hills, "that you wanted a clean, clever boy like me."

"Well," says the Giant, "I am the Giant of the Hundred Hills, and do want such a fine fellow as you. I have to go away every day," he says, "to battle with another giant at the other end of the world, and when I am away I want somebody to look after my house and place. If you will be of good, faithful service to me, and do everything I tell you, I will give you a bag of gold at the end of the time." Jack promised he would do all that. The Giant then gave him a hearty supper and a good bed, and well he slept that night. In the morning the Giant had him called up before the first lark was in the sky.

"Jack, my brave boy," says he, "I have got to be off to the other end of the world to-day to fight the Giant of the Four Winds, and it is time you were up and looking after your business. You have got to put this house in order, and look after everything in it until I come back to-night. To every room in the house and to every place about the house you can go, except the stable. My stable door is closed, and on the peril of your life, don't open it or go into the stable. Keep that in mind."

Jack said he certainly would. Then the Giant visited the stable, and started off; and as soon as he was gone, Jack went fixing and arranging the house and setting everything in order. And a wonderful house it was to Jack, so big and so great; and after that he went to the castle yard and into every house and building there, except the stable: and when he had visited all the rest of them, he stood before the stable and looked at it a long time. "And I wonder," says Jack, says he, "I wonder what can be in there, and what is the reason he wants me on the peril of my life not to go into it? I would like to go and peep in, and there certainly would be no harm."

Every door in and about the Giant's place was opened by a little ring turning on a pivot in the middle of the door. Forward to the stable door Jack then steps, turns the little ring, and the door flew open. Inside what does Jack see but a mare and a bear standing by the manger, and neither of them eating. There was hay before the bear and meat before the mare.

"Well," says Jack, "it is no wonder, poor creatures, you are not eatin'. That was a nice blunder of the Giant," and he stepped in and changed their food, putting hay before the mare and meat before the bear, and at once both of them fell to it and Jack went out and closed the stable door. As he did so his finger stuck in the ring, and he pulled and struggled to get it away, but he could not.

That was a fix for poor Jack, "And by this and by that," says he, "the Giant will be back and find me stuck here;" so he whips out his knife, and cuts off his finger, and leaves it there.

And when the Giant came home that night, says he to Jack, "Well, Jack, what sort of a day have you had this day, and how did you get along?"

"I had a fine day," says Jack, "and got along very well indeed."

"Jack," says he, "show me your two hands;" and when Jack held out his two hands, the Giant saw one of his fingers gone. He got black in the face with rage when he saw this, and he said, "Jack, did I not warn you on the peril of your life not to go into that stable?"

Poor Jack pleaded all he could, and said he did not mean to, but curiosity got the best of him, and he thought he would open the door and peep in.

Says the Giant, "No man before ever opened that stable door and lived to tell it, and you, too, would be a dead man this minute only for one thing. Your father's father did my father a great service once. I am the man who never forgets a good thing, and for that service," says he, "I give you your life and pardon this time; but if you ever do the like again, you won't live."

Jack, he promised that surely and surely he would never do the like again. His supper he got that night, and to bed. And at early morning again the Giant had him up, and, "Jack," says he, "I must be off to the other end of the world again and fight the Giant of the Four Winds. You know your duty is to look after this house and place and set everything in order about it, and go everywhere you like, only don't open the stable door or go into the stable, on the peril of your life."

"I will mind all that," says Jack.

Then that morning again the Giant visited the stable before he went away. And after he had gone, to his work went Jack, wandering through the house, cleaning and setting everything in order about it, and out into the yard he went, and fixed and arranged everything out there, except the stable. He stood before the stable door a good while this day, and says he to himself, "I wonder how the bear and the mare are doing, and what the Giant did when he went in to see them? I would give a great deal to know," says he. "I will take a peep in."

Into the ring of the door he put his finger, and turned it, and looked in, and there he saw the mare and the bear standing as on the day before and neither of them eating. In Jack steps. "And no wonder, poor creatures," says he, "you don't eat, when that is the way the Giant blundered," he says, after he saw the meat before the mare and the hay before the bear this time also.

Jack then changed the food, putting the hay before the mare and the meat before the bear, as it should be, and very soon both the mare and the bear were eating heartily; and then Jack went out. He closed the door, and when he did so, his finger stuck in the ring; and pull and struggle though Jack did, he could not get it out.

"Och, och, och," says Jack, says he, "I am a dead man to-day surely."

He whips out his knife, and cuts off his finger, and leaves it there, and 't was there when the Giant came home that night.

"Well, Jack, my fine boy," says he, "how have you got on to-day?"

"Oh, finely, finely," says Jack, says he, holding his hands behind his back all the same.

"Show me your hands, Jack," says the Giant, "till I see if you wash them and keep them clean always." And when Jack showed his hands, the Giant got black in the face with rage, and says he, "Did n't I forgive you your life yesterday for going into that stable, and you promised never to do it again, and here I find you out, once more?"

The Giant ranted and raged for a long time, and then says he, "Because your father's father did my father such a good turn, I suppose I will have to spare your life this second time; but, Jack," says he, "if you should live for a hundred years, and spend them all in my service, and if you should then again open that door and put your foot into my stable that day," says he, "you will be a dead man as sure as there is a head on you. Mind that!"

Jack, he thanked the Giant very much for sparing his life, and promised that he never, never would again disobey him.

The next morning the Giant had Jack up early, and told him he was going off this day to fight the Giant at the other end of the world, and gave Jack his directions, and warned him just as on the other days. Then he went into the stable before he went away. And when he was gone, Jack went through all the house, and through the whole yard, setting everything in order, and when everything was done, he stood before the stable door.

"I wonder," says Jack, "how the poor mare and the poor bear are getting along and what the Giant of the Hundred Hills was doing here to-day? I should very much like," says he, "to take one wee, wee peep in," and he opened the door.

Jack peeped in, and there the mare and the bear stood looking at each other again, and neither of them taking a morsel. And there was the meat before the mare and the hay before the bear, just as on the other days.

"Poor creatures," says Jack, "it is no wonder you are not eating, and hungry and hungry you must be." And forward he steps, and changes the food, putting it as it should be, the hay before the mare and the meat before the bear, and to it both of them fell.

And when he had done this, up speaks the mare, and "Poor Jack," says she, "I am sorry for you. This night you will be killed surely; and sorry for us, too, I am, for we will be killed as well as you."

"Oh, oh, oh!" says Jack, says he, "that is terrible. Is there nothing we can do?"

"Only one thing," says the mare.

"What is that?" says Jack.

"It 's this," says the mare; "put that saddle and bridle on me, and let us start off and be away, far, far from this country, when the Giant comes back." And soon Jack had the saddle and bridle on the mare, and on her back he got to start off.

"Oh!" says the bear, speaking up, "both of you are going away to leave me in for all the trouble."

"No," says the mare, "we will not do that. Jack," says she, "take the chains and tie me to the bear."

Jack tied the mare to the bear with chains that were hanging by, and then the three of them, the mare and the bear and Jack, started, and on and on they went, as fast as they could gallop.

After a long time, says the mare: "Jack, look behind you, and see what you can see."

Jack looked behind him, and "Oh!" says he, "I see the Giant of the Hundred Hills coming like a raging storm. Very soon he will be on us, and we will all three be murdered."

Says the mare, says she, "We have a chance yet. Look in my left ear, and see what you can see;" and in her left ear Jack looked, and saw a little chestnut.

"Throw it over your left shoulder," says the mare.

Jack threw it over his left shoulder, and that minute there arose behind them a chestnut wood ten miles wide. On and on they went that day and that night; and till the middle of the next day, "Jack," says the mare, "look behind you, and see what you can see."

Jack looked behind him, and "Oh!" says he, "I see the Giant of the Hundred Hills coming tearing after us like a harvest hurricane."

"Do you see anything strange about him, Jack?" says the mare.

"Yes," says Jack, says he, "there are as many bushes on the top of his head, and as much fowl stuck about his feet and legs as will keep him in fire-wood and flesh for years to come. We are done for this time, entirely," says poor Jack.

"Not yet," says the mare; "there is another chance. Look into my right ear, and see what you can see."

In the mare's right ear Jack looked, and found a drop of water.

"Throw it over your left shoulder, Jack," says the mare, "and see what will happen."

Over his left shoulder Jack threw it, and all at once a lough sprung up between them and the Giant that was one hundred miles wide every way and one hundred miles deep.

"Now," says the mare, "he cannot reach us until he drinks his way through the lough, and very likely he will drink until he bursts, and then we shall be rid of him altogether."

Jack thanked God, and on he went. It was not long now until he reached the borders of Scotland, and there he saw a great wood.

"Now," says the mare and the bear, "this wood must be our hiding-place."

"And what about me?" says Jack.

"For you, Jack," says the mare, "you must push on and look for employment. The castle of the King of Scotland is near by, and I think you will be likely to get employment there; but first I must change you into an ugly little hookedy-crookedy fellow, because the King of Scotland has three beautiful daughters, and he won't take into his service a handsome fellow like you, for fear his daughters would fall in love with you."

Then the mare put her nostrils to Jack's breast and blew her breath over him, and Jack was turned into an ugly little hookedy-crookedy fellow.

"Jack," says the mare, "before you go, look into my left ear, and take what you see there."

Out of the mare's left ear Jack took a little cap.

"Jack," says she, "that is a wishing-cap, and every time you put it on and wish to have anything done, it will be done. Whenever you are in any trouble," the mare says, "come back to me, and I will do what I can for you, and now good-bye."

So Jack said good-bye to the mare and to the bear, and set off. When he got out of the wood, he soon saw a castle, and walked up to it and went in by the kitchen. A servant was busy scouring knives. He told her he wanted employment. She said the King of Scotland would employ no man in his house, so he might as well push on. But Jack insisted that the King would give him work, and at length the girl consented to go and let the King know.

When the girl had gone away, Jack put on his wishing-cap and wished the knives and forks scoured, and all at once the knives and forks, that were piled in a stack ten yards high, were scoured as brightly as new pins; and though the King of Scotland did not want to employ him, when he found how quickly Jack had scoured all the big stack of knives and forks, he agreed to keep him. But first he brought down his three daughters to see Jack, so that he could observe what impression Jack made upon them. When they came into the kitchen and saw the ugly little fellow, every one of the three fainted and had to be carried out.

"It is all right," says the King; "we will surely keep you," and Jack was employed, and sent out into the garden to work there.

Now at this time the King of the East declared war on the King of Scotland. The King of the East had a mighty army entirely, and he threatened to wipe the King of Scotland off the face of the earth.

The King of Scotland was very much troubled, and he consulted with his Grand Adviser what was best to be done, and his Grand Adviser counselled that he should at once give his three daughters in marriage to sons of kings, and in that way get great help for the war. The King said this was a grand idea.

So he sent out messengers to all parts of the world to say that his three beautiful daughters were ready for marriage. In a very short time the son of the King of Spain came and married the eldest daughter, and the son of the King of France came and married the second, and a whole lot of princes came looking for the youngest, who was the most beautiful of the three and whose name was Yellow Rose; but she would not take one of them, and for this the King ordered her never to come into his sight, nor into company, again.

Yellow Rose got very downhearted, and spent almost all her time now wandering in the garden, where the Hookedy-Crookedy lad was looking after the flowers, and she used to come around again and again, chatting to Hookedy-Crookedy. And so it was not long until he saw that the Yellow Rose was in love with him, and he got just as deeply in love with her, for she was a beautiful and charming girl.

The next thing the Grand Adviser counselled the King was that he should send his two new sons-in-law, the Prince of Spain and the Prince of France, to the Well of the World's End for bottles of Ioca* to take to battle with them, that they might cure the wounded and dead men. So the King ordered his sons-in-law to go to the Well of the World's End and bring him back two bottles of Ioca.

The Yellow Rose told Hookedy-Crookedy this, and when he had turned it over in his mind, he said to himself, "I will go and have a chat with the mare and the bear about this."

So off to the woods he went, and right glad the mare and the bear were to see him. He told them all that had happened, and then he told them how the King's two sons-in-law were to start to the Well of the World's End the next day, and asked the mare's advice about it.

"Well, Jack," says the mare, "I want you to go with them. Take an old hunter in the King's stable, an old bony, skinny animal that is past all work, and put an old straw saddle on him, and dress yourself in the most ragged dress you can get, and join the two men on the road, and say that you are going with them. They will be heartily ashamed of you, Jack, and your old horse, and they will do everything to get rid of you. When you come to the crossroads, one of them will propose to go in and have a drink; and while you are chatting over your drink, they will propose that the three of you separate and every one take a road by himself to go to the Well of the World's End, and that all three shall meet at the crossroads again, and whoever is back first with the bottle of water is to be the greatest hero of them all. You agree to this. When they start on their roads, they will not go many miles till they fill their bottles from spring wells by the roadside and hurry back to the meeting-place, and then continue on home to the King of Scotland and give him these bottles as bottles of Ioca from the Well of the World's End. But you will be before them. After you have set out on the road, and when you have gone around the first bend, put on your wishing-cap and wish for two bottles of Ioca from the Well of the World's End, and at once you will have them." And then the mare directed Jack fully all that he was to do after.

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* Ioca was a liquid that cured all wounds and restored the dead to life.

Jack thanked the mare, and bade good-bye to her, and went away.

The next day, when the King's two sons-in-law set out on their grand steeds to go to the Well of the World's End, they had not gone far when Jack, in a ragged old suit and sitting on a straw saddle on an old white skinny horse, joined them and told them he too was going with them for a bottle of Ioca. Right heartily ashamed were they of Jack and ready to do anything to get rid of him.

By and by, when they came to where the road divided into three, they proposed to have a drink, and as they set off to drink they proposed that each take a road for himself, and whoever got back first with a bottle of Ioca would be the greatest hero. All agreed, and each chose his own road and set out.

When Jack had got around the first bend, he put on his wishing-cap and wished for two bottles of Ioca from the Well of the World's End, and no sooner had he wished than he had them; and back again he came, and when the other two came riding up, surprised they were to find Jack there before them. They said that Jack had not been to the Well of the World's End and it was no Ioca he had with him, but some water from the roadside.

Said Jack, "Take care that is not your own story. Just test them; when the servant comes in, you cut off his head and then cure him with water from your bottles."

But both refused to do this, for they knew the water in their bottles could not cure anything, and they defied Jack to do it.

"Very soon I will do it," said Jack.

So when the servant came in with the bottles of Ioca, Jack drew his sword and whipped his head off him, and in a minute's time, with two drops from one of his bottles, he had the head on again.

Says they to Hookedy-Crookedy, "What will you take for your two bottles?"

Says Jack, "I will take the golden balls of your marriage pledge, and also you shall allow me to write something on your backs."

And they agreed to this. They handed over to Jack the two golden balls that were their marriage tokens, and they let Jack write on their bare backs; and what Jack wrote on each of them was, "This is an unlawfully married man." Then he gave them the bottles of Ioca, and they brought them to the King, and Jack returned to his garden again.

He did not tell the Yellow Rose where he had been and what doing, only said he was away on a message for her father. As soon as the King got the bottles of Ioca, he gave orders that his army should move to battle the next day.

The next morning early Jack was over to the wood to consult the mare. He told her what was going to happen that day. Says the mare, "Look in my left ear, Jack, and see what you will see."

Jack looked in the mare's left ear, and took out of it a grand soldier's dress. The mare told him to put it on and get on her back. On he put the dress, and at once Hookedy-Crookedy was transformed into a very handsome, dashing young fellow, and off went Jack and the mare and the bear, the three of them, away to the war. Every one saw them, and they admired Jack very much, he was such a handsome, clever-looking fellow, and the word was passed on to the King about the great Prince who was riding to the war — himself, the mare, and the bear. The King came to see him, too, and asked him on which side he was going to fight.

"I will strike no stroke this day," says Jack, "except on the side of the King of Scotland."

The King thanked him very heartily, and said he was sure they would win. So they went into the battle with Jack at their head, and Jack struck east and west and in all directions and at every blow of his sword the wind of his stroke tossed houses on the other side of the world, and in a very short time the King of the East ran off, with all his soldiers that were still left alive. Then the King of Scotland invited Jack to come home with him, as he was going to give a great feast in his honor, but Jack said no, he could not go.

"They don't know at home," said Jack, "where I am at all" — and neither they did — "so I must be off to them as quickly as possible."

"Then," says the King, "the least I can do is to give you a present. Here is a tablecloth," says he, "and every time you spread it out you will have it covered with eating and drinking of all sorts."

Jack took it, and thanked him, and rode away. He left the mare and the bear in their own wood, and became Hookedy-Crookedy again, and ran back to his garden. The Yellow Rose told him of the brave soldier that had won her father's battle that day.

"Well, well," says Jack, says he, "he must have been a grand fellow entirely. It is a pity I was not there, but I had to go on a message for the King."

"Poor Hookedy-Crookedy," says she, "what could you do if you were there yourself?"

Jack went to the wood again next morning, and consulted with the mare.

"Jack," said the mare, "look in the inside of my left ear, and see what you will see," and Jack took out of her left ear a soldier's suit, done off with silver, the grandest ever seen, and at the mare's advice he put the suit on, and mounted on her back, and the three of them went off to the battle. Every one was admiring the beautiful, dashing fellow that was riding to the battle this day, and word came to the King, and the King came to speak to him and welcomed him heartily.

He said, "Your brother came with us the last day we went into the battle. Your brother is a very handsome, fine-looking fellow. What side are you going to fight on?"

Says Jack, "I will strike no stroke on any side but yours this day."

The King thanked him very heartily, and into the battle they went with Jack at their head, and Jack struck east and west and in all directions, and the wind of the strokes blew down forests in the other end of the world, and very soon the King of the East, with all his soldiers that were still alive, drew off from the battle.

Then the King thanked Jack and invited him to his castle, where he would give a feast in his honor. But Jack said he could not go, for they did not know at home where he was, and they would be uneasy about him until he reached home again.

"Then," says the King, "the least I can do for you is to give you a present. Here is a purse, and no matter how often and how much you pay out of it, it will never be empty."

Jack took it, and thanked him, and rode away. In the wood he left the mare and the bear, and was again changed into Hookedy-Crookedy, and went home to his garden. The Yellow Rose came out, and told him about the great victory a brave and beautiful soldier, brother to the fine fellow of the day before, had won for her father.

"Well, well," says Jack, says he, "that was very wonderful entirely. I am sorry I was not there, but I had to be away on a message for your father."

"But, my poor Hookedy-Crookedy," says she, "it was better so, for what could you do?"

Three days after that the King of the East took courage to come to battle again. The morning of the battle Jack went to the wood to consult the mare.

"Look into my left ear, Jack, and see what you will see," and from the mare's left ear Jack drew out a most gorgeous soldier's suit, done off with gold braiding and ornaments of every sort. By the mare's advice he put it on, and himself, the mare, and the bear went off to the war.

The King soon heard of the wonderfully grand fellow that was riding to the war to-day with the mare and the bear, and he came to Jack and welcomed him and told him how his two brothers had won the last two victories for him. He asked Jack on what side he was going to fight.

"I will strike no stroke this day," says Jack, "only on the King of Scotland's side."

The King thanked him heartily, and said, "We will surely win the victory," and then into the battle they rode with Jack at their head, and Jack struck east and west and in all directions, and the wind of the strokes tumbled mountains at the other end of the world, and very soon the King of the East with all his soldiers that were left alive took to their heels and never stopped running until they went as far as the world would let them.

Then the King came to Jack and thanked him over and over again, and said he would never be able to repay him. He then invited him to come to his castle, where he would give a little feast in his honour, but Jack said they did n't know at home where he was and they would be uneasy about him, and so he could not go with the King.

"But," says he, "I and my brothers will come to the feast with you at any other time."

"What day will the three of you come?" said the King.

"Only one of us can leave home in one day," said Jack. "I will come to feast with you to-morrow, and my second brother the day after, and my third brother the day after that."

The King agreed to this and thanked him. "And now," said the King, "let me give you a present," and he gave him a comb, such that every time he combed his hair with it he would comb out of it bushels of gold and silver, and it would transform the ugliest man that ever was into the nicest and handsomest. Jack took it and thanked the King and rode away.

On this day, as on the other two days after the battle, they cured the dead and the wounded with the bottles of Ioca, and all were well again. When Jack went to the wood, he left the mare and the bear in it and became Hookedy-Crookedy again, and went home and to his garden. The Yellow Rose came to him and had wonderful news for him this day about the terrible grand fellow entirely, who had won the battle for her father that day; brother to the two brave fellows who had won the battles on the other two days.

"Well," says Jack, says he, "those must be wonderful chaps.

I wish I had been there; but I had to be away on a message for your father all day."

"Oh, my poor Hookedy-Crookedy," says she, "it was better so, for what could you do?"

The next day, when it was near dinner time, he went off to the wood to the mare and the bear and got on the suit he had worn the day before in the battle, and mounted the mare and rode for the castle, and when he came there all the gates happened to be closed, but he put the mare at the walls, which were nine miles high, and leaped them.

The King scolded the gate-keepers, but Jack said a trifle like that did n't harm him or his mare. After dinner the King asked him what he thought of his two daughters and their husbands. Jack said they were very good and asked him if he had any more daughters in his family.

The King said he used to have another, the youngest, but she would not consent to marry as he wished, and he had banished her out of his sight.

Jack said he would like to see her.

The King said he never wished to let her enter company again, but he could not refuse Jack; so the Yellow Rose was sent for.

Jack fell a-chatting with her and used all his arts to win her; and of course, in this handsome Jack she did not recognize ugly little Hookedy-Crookedy. He told her he had heard that she had the very bad taste to fall in love with an ugly, crooked, wee fellow in her father's garden.

"I am a handsome fellow, and a rich prince," says Jack. "and I will give you myself and all I possess if you will only say you will accept me."

She was highly insulted, and she showed him that very quickly. She said, "I won't sit here and hear the man I love abused," and she got up to leave.

"Well," says Jack, "I admire your spirit; but before you go," says he, "let me make you a little present," and he handed her a tablecloth. "There," says he, "if you marry Hookedy-Crookedy, as long as you have this tablecloth, you will never want eating and drinking of the best."

The other two sisters grabbed to get the tablecloth from her but Jack put out his hands and pushed them back.

At dinner time the next day Jack came in the dress in which he had gone into the second battle, and with the mare he cleared the walls as on the day before.

The King was enraged at the gate-keepers and began to scold them, but Jack laughed at them and said a trifle like that was nothing to him or his mare.

After dinner was over the King asked what he thought of his two daughters and their husbands.

Jack said they were very good, and asked him if he had any more daughters in his family.

The King said, "I have no more except one who won't do as I wish and who has fallen in love with an ugly, crooked, wee fellow in my garden, and I ordered her never to come into my sight."

But Jack said he would very much like to see her.

The King said that on Jack's account he would break his vow and let her come in. So the Yellow Rose was brought in, and Jack fell to chatting with her. He did all he could to make her fall in love with him, and told her of all his great wealth and possessions and offered himself to her, and said if she only would marry him she should live in ease and luxury and happiness all the days of her life, as she never could do with Hookedy-Crookedy.

But Yellow Rose got very angry, and said: "I won't sit here and listen to such things," and she got up to leave the room.

"Well," says Jack, "I admire your spirit, and before you go let me make you a little present."

So he handed her a purse. "Here," says he, "is a purse, and all the days yourself and Hookedy-Crookedy live you will never want for money, for that purse will never be empty."

Her sisters made a grab to snatch it from her, but Jack shoved them back, and went out. And Jack rode away with the mare after dinner and left her in the wood.

When he came back to his garden he always came in the

Hookedy-Crookedy shape and always pretended he had been off on a message for the King.

The third day he went to the wood again. He dressed in the suit in which he had gone to the first battle, and when he came back he went to the castle and cleared the walls, and when the King scolded the gate-keepers Jack told him never to mind, as that was a small trifle to him and his mare.

A very grand dinner indeed Jack had this day, and when they chatted after dinner the King asked him how he liked his two daughters and their husbands.

He said he liked them very well, and asked him if he had any more daughters in his family.

The King said no, except one foolish one who would n't do as he wished, and who had fallen in love with an ugly, crooked, wee fellow in his garden, and she was never to come within his sight again.

Says Jack, "I would like to see that girl."

The King said he could not refuse Jack any request he made, so he sent for the Yellow Rose. When she came in, Jack fell into chat with her, and did his very, very best to make her fall in love with him. But it was of no use. He told her of all his wealth and all his grand possessions, and said if she would marry him she should own all these, and all the days she should live she should be the happiest woman in the wide world, but if she married Hookedy-Crookedy, he said, she would never be free from want and hardships, besides having an ugly husband.

If the Yellow Rose was in a rage on the two days before, she was in a far greater rage now. She said she would n't sit there to listen. She told Jack that Hookedy-Crookedy was in her eyes a far more handsome and beautiful man than he or than any king's son she had ever seen. She said to Jack, that if he were ten times as handsome and a hundred times as wealthy, she would n't give Hookedy-Crookedy's little finger for himself or for all his wealth and possessions, and then she got up to leave the room.

"Well," says Jack, says he, "I admire your spirit very much and," says he, "I would like to make you a little present. Here is a comb," he said, "and it will comb out of your hair a bushel of gold and a bushel of silver every time you comb with it, and, besides," says he, "it will make handsome the ugliest man that ever was."

When the other sisters heard this they rushed to snatch the comb from her, but Jack threw them backwards so very roughly that their husbands sprang at him. With a back switch of his two hands Jack knocked the husbands down senseless. The King flew into a rage, and said, "How dare you do that to the two finest and bravest men of this world?"

"Fine and brave, indeed!" said Jack. "One and the other are worthless creatures, and not even your lawful sons-in-law."

"How dare you say that?" says the King.

"Strip their backs where they lie and see for yourself." And there the King saw written, "An unlawfully married man."

"What is the meaning of this?" says the King. "They were lawfully married to my two daughters, and they have the golden tokens of the marriage.

Jack drew out from his pocket the golden balls and handed them to the King, and said, "It is I who have the tokens."

The Yellow Rose had gone off to the garden in the middle of all this. Jack made the King sit down, and told him all his story, and how he came by the golden balls. He told him how he was Hookedy-Crookedy, and that it reflected a great deal of honour on his youngest daughter that she whom the King thought so worthless should refuse to give up Hookedy-Crookedy for the one she thought a wealthy prince. The King, you may be sure, was now highly delighted to grant him all he desired. A couple of drops of Ioca brought the King's two sons-in-law to their senses again, and at Jack's request, they were ordered to go and live elsewhere. Jack went off, left his mare in the wood, and came into the garden as Hookedy-Crookedy. He told the Yellow Rose he had been gathering bilberries.

"Oh," says she, "I have something grand for you. Let me comb your hair with this comb."

Hookedy-Crookedy put his head in her lap, and she combed out a bushel of gold and silver; and when he stood up again, she saw Hookedy-Crookedy no more, but instead the beautiful prince that had been trying to win her in her father's drawing-room for the last three days; and then and there to her Jack told his whole story, and it 's Yellow Rose who was the delighted girl.

With little delay they were married. The wedding lasted a year and a day, and there were five hundred fiddlers, five hundred fluters and a thousand fifers at it, and the last day was better than the first.

Shortly after the marriage, Jack and his bride were out walking one day. A beautiful young woman crossed their path. Jack addressed her, but she gave him a very curt reply.

"Your manners are not so handsome as your looks," said Jack to her.

"And bad as they are, they are better than your memory, Hookedy-Crookedy," says she.

"What do you mean?" says Jack.

She led Jack aside, and she told him, "I am the mare who was so good to you. I was condemned to that shape for a number of years, and now my enchantment is over. I had a brother who was enchanted into a bear, and whose enchantment is over now also. I had hopes," she says, "that some day you would be my husband, but I see," she says, "that you quickly forgot all about me. No matter now," she says; "I could n't wish you a better and handsomer wife than you have got. Go home to your castle, and be happy and live prosperous. I shall never see you, and you will never see me again."

Arndt's Night Underground

IT was on a dreary winter's night, just such a one as it may be now — only you cannot see it for your closed shutters and curtains — that two children were coming home from their daily work, for their parents were poor, and Arndt and Reutha had already to use their little hands in labour. They were very tired, and as they came across the moor the wind blew in their faces, and the distant roaring of the Baltic sea, on whose shore they lived, sounded gloomy and terrible.

"Dear Arndt, let me sit down and rest for a minute, I can go no farther," said Reutha, as she sank down on a little mound that seemed to rise up invitingly, with its shelter of bushes, from the midst of the desolate moor.

The elder brother tried to encourage his little sister, as all kind brothers should do; he even tried to carry her a little way; but she was too heavy for him, and they went back to the mound. Just then the moon came out, and the little hillock looked such a nice resting-place, that Reutha longed more than ever to stay. It was not a cold night, so Arndt was not afraid; and at last he wrapped his sister up in her woollen cloak, and she sat down.

"I will just run a little farther and try if I can see the light in father's window," said Arndt. "You will not be afraid, Reutha?"

"Oh, no! I am never afraid."

"And you will not go to sleep?"

"Not I," said Reutha; and all the while she rubbed her eyes to keep them open, and leaned her head against a branch which seemed to her as soft and inviting as a pillow.

Arndt went a little way, until he saw the light which his father always placed so as to guide the children over the moor. Then he felt quite safe and at home, and went back cheerfully to his sister.

Reutha was not there! Beside the little mound and among the bushes did poor Arndt search in terror, but he could not find his sister. He called her name loudly — there was no answer. Not a single trace of her could be found; and yet he had not been five minutes away.

"Oh! what shall I do?" sobbed the boy; "I dare not go home without Reutha!" And there for a long time did Arndt sit by the hillock, wringing his hands and vainly expecting that his sister would hear him and come back. At last there passed by an old man, who travelled about the country selling ribbons and cloths.

"How you are grown since I saw you last, my little fellow!" said the man. "And where is your sister Reutha?"

Arndt burst into tears, and told his friend of all that had happened that night. The peddler's face grew graver and graver as the boy told him it was on this very spot that he lost his little sister.

"Arndt," whispered he, "did you ever hear of the Hill-men? It is they who have carried little Reutha away."

And then the old man told how in his young days he had heard strange tales of this same moor; for that the little mound was a fairy-hill, where the underground dwarfs lived, and where they often carried off young children to be their servants, taking them under the hill, and only leaving behind their shoes. "For," said the peddler, "the Hill-people are very particular, and will make all their servants wear beautiful glass shoes instead of clumsy leather."

So he and Arndt searched about the hill, and there, sure enough, they found Reutha's tiny shoes hidden under the long grass. At this her brother's tears burst forth afresh.

"Oh! what shall I do to bring back my poor sister? The Hill-men and women will kill her!"

"No," said the old man, "they are very good little people, and they live in a beautiful palace underground. Truly, you will never see Reutha again, for they will keep her with them a hundred years; and when she comes back you will be dead and buried, while she is still a beautiful child."

And then, to comfort the boy, the peddler told him wonderful stories of the riches and splendour of the Hill-people, how that sometimes they had been seen dancing at night on the mounds, and how they wore green caps, which, if any mortal man could get possession of, the dwarfs were obliged to serve him and obey him in everything. All this Arndt drank in with eager ears; and when the peddler went away he sat a long time thinking.

"I will do it," at last he said aloud. "I will try to get my dear Reutha safe back again."

And the boy stole noiselessly to the mound which the Hill-men were supposed to inhabit. He hid himself among the surrounding bushes, and there he lay in the silence and darkness, his young heart beating wildly, and only stilled by one thought that lay ever there, that of the lost Reutha. At last a sudden brightness flashed upon the boy's eyes; it could not be the moon, for she had long set. No; but it was a sight more glorious than Arndt had ever dreamed of.

The grassy hill opened, and through this aperture the boy saw a palace underground, glittering with gold and gems. The Hill-men danced about within it, dressed like tiny men and women. Arndt thought how beautiful they were, though they seemed no bigger than his own baby sister of six months old. One by one they rose out of the opening, and gambolled on the snow-covered mound; but wherever they trod flowers sprang up, and the air grew light and warm as summer. After a while they ceased dancing and began ball-playing, tossing their little green caps about in great glee. And lo and behold! one of these wonderful caps, being tossed farther than usual, lighted on the very forehead of the peeping boy!

In a moment he snatched it and held it fast, with a cry of triumph. The light faded — the scene vanished — only Arndt heard a small weak voice whispering, humbly and beseechingly in his ear.

"Please, noble gentleman, give me my cap again."

"No, no, good Hill-man," answered the courageous boy, "you have got my little sister, and I have got your cap, which I shall keep."

"I will give you a better cap for it — all gold and jewels — oh, so beautiful!" said the Hill-man, persuasively.

"I will not have it. What good would it do me? No, no, I am your master, good dwarf, as you very well know, and I command you to take me down in the hill with you, for I want to see Reutha."

There shone a dim light on the grass, like a glowworm, and then Arndt saw the elfin mound open again; but this time the palace looked like a dim, gloomy staircase. On the top stair stood the little Hill-man, holding the glowworm lamp, and making many low bows to his new master. Arndt glanced rather fearfully down the staircase; but then he thought of Reutha, and his love for her made him grow bold. He took upon himself a lordly air, and bade his little servant lead the way.

The Hill-man took him through beautiful galleries, and halls, and gardens, until the boy's senses were intoxicated with these lovely things. Every now and then he stopped, and asked for Reutha: but then there was always some new chamber to be seen, or some dainty banquet to be tasted; until, by degrees, Arndt's memory of his little sister grew dimmer, and he revelled in the delights of the fairy palace hour after hour. When night came — if so it could be called in that lovely place, where night was only day shadowed over and made more delicious — the boy felt himself lulled by sweet music to a soft dreaminess, which was all the sleep that was needed in that fairy paradise.

Thus, day after day passed in all gay delights, the elfin people were the merriest in the world, and they did all their little master desired. And Arndt knew not that while they surrounded him with delights it was only to make him forget his errand. But one day, when the boy lay on a green dell in the lovely fairy-garden, he heard a low, wailing song, and saw a troop of little mortal children at work in the distance. Some were digging ore, and others making jewellery, while a few stood in the stream that ran by, beating linen, as it seemed. And among these poor little maidens, who worked so hard and sang so mournfully, was his own sister Reutha.

"No one cares for me," she murmured; and her song had in it a plaintive sweetness, very different from the way in which the little Danish maiden spoke on earth. "Reutha is alone — her hands are sore with toil — her feet bleed — but no one pities her. Arndt sleeps in gorgeous clothes, while Reutha toils in rags. Arndt is the master — Reutha is the slave! Poor Reutha is quite alone!"

Even amidst the spells of fairyland that voice went to the brother's heart. He called the Hill-people, and bade them bring Reutha to him. Then he kissed her, and wept over her, and dressed her in his own beautiful robes, while the Hill-men dared not interfere. Arndt took his sister by the hand, and said —

"Now, let us go; we have stayed long enough. Good Hill-man, you shall have your cap again when you have brought Reutha and me to our own father's door."

But the Hill-man shook his tiny head, and made his most obsequious bow. "Noble master, anything but this! This little maid we found asleep on our hill, and she is ours for a hundred years."

Here Arndt got into a passion; for, convinced of the power the little green cap gave him over the dwarfs, he had long lost all fear of them. He stamped with his foot until the little man leaped up a yard high, and begged his master to be more patient.

"How dare you keep my sister? you ugly little creatures!" cried the boy, his former pleasant companion becoming at once hateful to him. But the Hill-people only gave him gentle answers; until at last he grew ashamed of being so angry with such tiny creatures. They led him to a palace, more beautiful than any he had yet seen, and showed him pearls and diamonds heaped up in basketfuls.

"You shall take all these away with you, noble sir!" said his little servant. "They will make you a rich man all the days of your life, and you will live in a palace as fine as ours. Is not that far better than having a poor helpless sister to work for?"

But Arndt caught a glimpse of Reutha, as she sat outside; weeping — she dared not enter with him — and he kicked the baskets over, and scattered the jewels like so many pebbles.

"Keep all your treasures, and give me my sister!" cried he.

Then the Hill-man tried him with something else. Arndt was a very handsome boy and everybody had told him so, until he was rather vain. Many a time, when he worked in the field, he used to look at himself in a clear, still pool, and think how golden his hair was, and how lithe and graceful his figure. Now the Hill-man knew all this; and so he led the boy to a crystal mirror and showed him his own beautiful form, set off with every advantage of rich dress. And then, by fairy spells, Arndt saw beside it the image of the little peasant as he was when he entered the hill.

"Think how different!" whispered the dwarf. He breathed on the mirror, and the boy saw himself as he would be when he grew up — a hard-working, labouring man; and opposite, the semblance of a young, graceful nobleman, whose face was the same which the stream had often told him was his own.

"We can make thee always thus handsome. Choose which thou wilt be," murmured the tempting voice.

The boy hesitated; but the same moment came that melancholy voice — "My brother is rich, and I am poor; he is clad in silk, and I in rags. Alas, for me!"

"It shall not be!" cried the noble boy. "I will go out of this place as poor as I came; but I will take Reutha with me. I will work all the days of my life; but Reutha shall not stay here. Hill-people! I want none of your treasures; but I command you to give me my sister, and let us go!"

Arndt folded his arms around Reutha, and walked with her through all the gorgeous rooms, the Hill-men and women following behind, and luring him with their sweetest songs and most bewitching smiles. But Reutha's voice and Reutha's smile had greatest power of all over her brother's heart.

They climbed the gloomy staircase, and stood at the opening in the hillock. Then the little Hill-man appealed once more to his master —

"Noble gentleman! remember, a life of labour with Reutha or one of continual pleasure alone! Think again!"

"No, not for a moment," said Arndt, as he felt the breezes of earth playing on his cheek. How sweet they were, even after the fragrant airs of elfin-land!

"At least, kind master, give me my cap!" piteously implored the Hill-man.

"Take it; and good-bye for evermore!" cried Arndt, as he clasped his sister in his arms and leaped out. The chasm closed, and the two children found themselves lying in a snow-drift, with the gray dawn of a winter's morning just breaking over them.

"Where have you been all night, my children?" cried the anxious mother, as they knocked at the door.

Had it, indeed, been only a single night, the months that seemed to have passed while they were under the hill? They could not tell, for they were now like all other children, and their wisdom learned in fairyland had passed away. It seemed only a dream, save that the brother and sister loved each other better than ever, and so they continued to do as long as they lived.

The Unicorn

FRITZ, Franz, and Hans were charcoal-burners. They lived with their mother in the depths of a forest, where they very seldom saw the face of another human being. Hans, the youngest, did not remember ever having lived anywhere else, but Fritz and Franz could just call to mind sunny meadows, in which they played as little children, plucking the flowers and chasing the butterflies. Indeed, Fritz was able to compare the present state of miserable poverty in which they lived with the ease and comfort they had enjoyed in years gone by.

Once upon a time they were well off. They had enough to eat every day; they lived in a comfortable house, surrounded by a nice garden, and with plenty of kind neighbours around them. Then came a change. Their father lost his money and was forced to leave this pleasant home, and to earn bread for his family by becoming a charcoal-burner. Everything now became different. Their house was a poor hut, composed of a few logs of wood knocked roughly together. Dry black bread with, occasionally, a few potatoes and lentils, and now and then, as a great treat, a little porridge, formed their food. And to secure even this they had to work hard from morning till night at their grimy trade. But their father was brave and patient, and, while he was alive, the wolf was kept some distance from the door. Besides, he could always put some heart into the boys when they began to flag, by a joke or a pleasant story. But he had died a year ago, owing to an accident he met with while chopping wood for the furnace, and since his death matters had been going from bad to worse with the family.

Fritz and Franz were, unfortunately, selfish, ill-conditioned lads, who made the worst instead of the best of their troubles, and who even grudged their mother and brother their share of the food. Hans, on the other hand, was a capital fellow. He always had a cheerful smile or word, and did all in his power to help his mother to keep in good spirits. One day, at dinner time, they were startled by a knock at the door. A knock at the door does not seem to us, perhaps, to be a very startling thing, but they, as I said, so seldom saw a strange face near their home that this knock at the door quite took away their breath. When it came, Fritz and Franz were sitting over the fire munching their last piece of black bread, and grumbling to each other as was their custom, while Hans, seated on the bed beside his mother, was telling her about what he saw and what he fancied when he was in the forest. Fritz was the first to recover himself, and he growled out, in his usual surly tone, "Come in." The door opened, and a gentleman entered. From his green dress, the gun that he carried in his hand, and the game-bag slung by his side, they saw that he was a huntsman, who had been amusing himself with shooting the game with which the forest abounded.

"Good morning, good friends," he said, in a cheerful tone. "Could you provide me with a cup of water and a mouthful of something to eat? I have forgotten to bring anything with me, and am ravenously hungry, and far from home."

Fritz and Franz first threw a scowling glance from under their eyebrows at the stranger by way of reply, then gave a grunt, and continued munching at their hunks of bread. Hans, however, was more polite. The only seats in the hut were occupied by Fritz and Franz, and as they showed no disposition to move, Hans dragged a log of wood from a corner and placed it before the visitor, and invited him to sit down. Then he produced a cup, scrupulously clean indeed, but sadly cracked and chipped, and, running outside, he filled it from a spring of delicious, cool water, which rose near the hut. As he had been busy talking to his mother, he had had no time to eat his share of the black bread, and so he handed his coarse crust to the stranger, saying he was sorry that there was nothing better to offer him.

"Thank you," said the stranger, courteously. "Hunger is the best sauce. There is no lunch I like so well as this." And he set to work with such a good will that, in a very short time, poor Hans's crust had vanished, and there was nothing left before the stranger but a few crumbs of bread on the table, and a few drops of water in the cup. These he kneaded carelessly together into a little pellet, about the size of a pea, while Hans told him, in answer to his questions, all about their lonely life in the forest, and the hardships which they had to endure.

When the stranger rose to go he said, "Well, I thank you heartily for your hospitality — now I will give you a word of advice. One of you lads should go and seek the sparkling golden water, which turns everything it touches into gold."

Fritz and Franz pricked up their ears at this, and both at once demanded where this sparkling golden water was to be found. The stranger turned toward them, courteously, although these were the first words they had spoken since his entrance, and replied:

"The sparkling golden water is to be found in the forest of dead trees, on the farther side of those blue mountains, which you may see on any clear day in the far distance. It is a three weeks' journey on foot from here."

Then, bowing to his hosts, he stepped toward the door. Hans, however, was there first, and opened it for him. Obeying a sign from the stranger, Hans followed him a little way from the hut. Then the stranger, taking from his pocket the little black bread pellet, said, "I know, because you gave me your dinner, that you will have to go hungry. I have no money to offer you, but here is something that will be of far greater value to you than money. Keep this pellet carefully, and when you seek the sparkling golden water, as I know you will, don't forget to bring it with you. Now go back: you must follow me no farther." So saying, the stranger waved his hand to Hans, and, plunging into the thicket, disappeared. Hans slipped the pellet into his pocket and re-entered the hut, where he found his brothers in loud dispute about the sparkling golden water. They were much too interested in the matter to pay any attention to Hans or to ask him, as he was afraid they would, whether the stranger had given him any money before he left. As he came in, he heard Fritz saying in a loud voice:

"I 'm the eldest, and I will go first to get the sparkling golden water. When I 've got it I will buy all the land hereabouts and become Count. I will hunt every day, and have lots of good wine; and sometimes, if I 'm passing near here, I 'll just look in to see how you all are, and to show you my fine clothes, and horses, and dogs, and servants." Fritz was, for him, almost gracious at the bright prospect before him.

"I don't care whether you 're the eldest or not," growled Franz, stubbornly, "I shall go, too, to find the sparkling golden water. When I 've found it I will buy the Burgomaster's office, and live in his house in the town yonder, and wear his fur robes and gold chain; and, best of all, walk at the head of all the grand processions. None of your wild hunting for me — give me ease and comfort."

At last it was decided, after a great deal of squabbling, that Fritz as the eldest should go first in search of the sparkling golden water, and accordingly next day he set out. Hans ventured to hint that the first thing to be done with this sparkling golden water when it was found should be to provide a comfortable home for their mother, but Fritz's only answer to this was a blow, and an angry order to Hans to mind his own business.

We cannot follow Fritz all the way on his journey. As he had no money he was forced to beg at the doors of the cottages and farmhouses which he passed, for food and shelter for the night. Now, this proved to be rather hard work, because nobody very much liked his looks or his manner; and people only gave him spare scraps now and then in order to get him to go away as soon as possible. However, he found himself, at last, approaching the forest of dead trees. He knew that it was the forest, although there was nobody there to tell him so. He had not, in fact, seen any human being for the last three days, but he felt that he could not be mistaken. A vast forest of enormous trees lifted leafless, sapless branches to the sky, and every breath of wind rattled them together like the bones of a skeleton. When he was about twenty yards from the forest a terrible sound came from it. It was as though a thousand horses were neighing and screaming all at once. Fritz's heart stood still. He wanted to run away, but his legs refused to move. As he stood there, shaking and quaking, there rushed out of the forest a huge unicorn with a spiral golden horn on his forehead.

"What seek you here?" asked the unicorn, in a voice of thunder. Fritz stammered out that he sought the sparkling golden water.

"What want you with the sparkling golden water, which is in my charge?" thundered the unicorn.

Fritz was almost too frightened to speak. He fell on his knees, put up his hands, and cried: "Oh, good Mr. Unicorn, oh, kind Mr. Unicorn, pray don't hurt me!"

The unicorn stamped furiously on the ground with his right forefoot. "Say this instant," he cried, "what it is that you want with the sparkling golden water!"

"I want to get money to buy land and become a Count," Fritz was just able to gasp out. The unicorn said nothing; he simply lowered his head, and with his golden horn tossed Fritz three hundred and forty-five feet in the air. Up went Fritz like a sky-rocket, and down he came like its stick, turning somersaults all the way. Fortunately for him, his fall was broken by the branches of one of the dead trees. If it had not been for this he would probably have been seriously hurt. Through these branches he crashed until he reached the point where they joined the trunk. The tree was hollow here, and Fritz tumbled down to the bottom of the trunk and found himself a prisoner. While he was feeling his arms and legs, to find out if any bones were broken or not, he had the satisfaction of hearing the unicorn, as he trotted back into the forest, muttering, loud enough for his words to pierce the bark and wood of Fritz's prison: —

"So much for you and your Countship!"

Fritz tried to get out, but in vain. The tree was too smooth and slippery and high for him to be able to clamber up, and he only hurt himself every time he attempted to escape. There was nothing for it, then, but for him to lie down and howl.

He had to satisfy his hunger as best he might, by eating the stray worms and woodlice and fungi, which he found creeping, crawling, and growing round about the roots of the tree. We will leave him there for the present and return to the others.

Franz, Hans, and their mother waited and waited for Fritz to come back. Hans and his mother could not believe it possible that, when he had secured the sparkling golden water, he would leave them in their poverty. Franz, on the other hand, judging Fritz by himself, thought that nothing was more likely. And Franz was most probably right. Six weeks was the shortest time in which Fritz could be home again. "Unless," said Hans, "he buys a horse and rides back, as he will be very well able to do when he has got the sparkling golden water." But six weeks passed, and two months, and three months, and no Fritz, either on horseback or afoot. Then Franz's patience came to an end. He must needs go, too.

"I won't wait here starving any longer," said he; "Fritz has forgotten all about us. I 'll get the sparkling golden water and become Burgomaster." So off he set, following the same road as Fritz, and meeting with much the same difficulties. They were, however, rather greater in his case than in his brother's. Folk remembered the ill-conditioned Fritz only too well, and Franz was so like him in looks and manner, that they shut the door in his face the moment he appeared, and ran upstairs and called out from the top windows of their houses, "Go away! There 's nothing for you here. The big dog 's loose in the yard. Go away, charcoal-burner."

However, by dint of perseverance, in which to say the truth he was not lacking, Franz, very hungry and sulky, reached the verge of the forest of dead trees. Out came the unicorn and asked his business. On Franz replying that he wanted the sparkling golden water in order to buy the house and post of Burgomaster, the unicorn tossed him into the air, and he tumbled into the same tree as Fritz. Then the unicorn trotted back into the forest, muttering, for Franz's benefit: "So much for you and your Burgomastership!"

When Fritz and Franz found themselves thus closely confined in the same prison, they, instead of making the best of each other's company, as sensible brothers would have done, fell to quarrelling and fighting, until at last neither would speak to the other, and that state of sulky silence they maintained all the time of their captivity.

The months passed by, but no news came to Hans and his mother of Fritz and Franz. Meanwhile Hans found that it became daily more difficult for him to earn enough money to support two people. Moreover, he saw that his mother was growing weaker, and he feared that she would die unless she had proper food and nourishment. At last he said:

"Mother, if there were only some one to take care of you, I would go in search of Fritz and Franz. You may be sure they have got the sparkling golden water by this time. They would never refuse me a few guldern, if I were to ask them and tell them how ill you are."

But Hans's mother did not at all like the idea of his leaving her, and she begged and prayed him not to go. He felt obliged, therefore, to submit, and stayed on for a little longer, until at last even his mother saw that they must either starve or do as Hans suggested. Most fortunately at this time there dropped in to see them another charcoal-burner, whom Hans used to call "Uncle Stoltz," although he was no uncle at all, but only a good-natured neighbour and an old friend of Hans's father. Uncle Stoltz strongly urged the mother to let her boy go in search of his brothers, adding, although he was nearly as poor as they were themselves:

"You come and live with me and my wife. While we have a crust to divide you shan't want."

So Hans's mother gave a reluctant consent, and went to live with Uncle Stoltz, while Hans went out in search of his brothers. By making inquiries he easily found the road which they had taken, but nobody ever thought of shutting the door in his face. On the contrary, his polite manners and cheerful looks made him a welcome guest at every cottage and farmstead at which he stopped. At last he, too, found himself on the verge of the forest of dead trees and face to face with the golden-horned unicorn. But Hans was not to be frightened as his brothers had been by the terrible voice and awe-striking appearance of the guardian of the fountain. In reply to the usual question, given in the usual tone of thunder: "What seek you here?" Hans replied, coolly, "I seek my brothers, Fritz and Franz."

"They are where you will never find them," said the unicorn, "so go home again."

"If I cannot find my brothers," said Hans, firmly, "I will not go home without the sparkling golden water."

"What want you with the sparkling golden water, which is in my charge?" asked the unicorn, in his terrible voice.

"I want to buy food and wine and comforts for my mother, who is very ill," answered Hans, undaunted. But his eyes filled with tears as he thought of his mother.

The unicorn spoke more gently.

"Have you," he asked, "the crystal ball? Because without it I cannot allow you to pass to the sparkling golden water."

"The crystal ball!" echoed Hans. "I never heard of such a thing."

"That 's a pity," said the unicorn, gravely; "I 'm afraid you will have to go home without the water; but, stay, feel in your pockets. You may have had the ball, and put it somewhere, and have forgotten all about it."

Hans smiled at the idea of the crystal ball lying, unknown to him, in his pockets, but he followed the suggestion of the unicorn, and found, as he knew he should find, nothing at all, except, indeed, the pellet of black bread which the stranger-huntsman had given him, and which he had not thought of from that day to this. "No," he said to the unicorn, "I have nothing in my pocket, except this pellet," and he was about to throw it away when the unicorn called out to him to stop.

"Let me see it," he said. "Why," he went on, "this *is* the crystal ball — look!"

Hans did look, and sure enough he found in his hand a tiny globe of crystal. He examined it with amazement. "Well," he said, "all I know is that a second ago it was a black-bread pellet."

"That may be," said the unicorn, carelessly; "anyhow, it is a crystal ball now, and the possession of it makes me your servant. It is my duty to carry you to the fountain of sparkling golden water, if you wish to go. Have you brought a flask with you?"

"No," said Hans. "Fritz took the only flask we had, and Franz an old bottle."

"Fritz, eh? Well, follow me a little way." So saying, the unicorn led Hans to the tree in which his brothers were imprisoned and, motioning him to be silent, cried out:

"Ho! Master Count, throw out the flask you have with you, if you please: it is wanted."

"'Shan't," growled Fritz's voice in reply, "unless you promise to let me out."

"Oh, you won't, won't you?" said the unicorn; "well, we 'll see."

With that he drew back a few steps, and then, running forward, thrust his sharp horn into the side of the hollow trunk from which Fritz's voice had issued. A loud yell came from the spot, showing that the horn had run into some tender part of Fritz's body, and at the same instant, the flask appeared flying out of the hole in the tree by which Fritz and Franz had entered.

"That 's right," said the unicorn, "now we shall do comfortably. Get on my back, grasp my mane tightly, hold your breath, and shut your eyes."

"If you please," said Hans, "will you set Fritz and Franz free first?"

The unicorn looked annoyed. "They are doing very well there," he said; "why should you disturb them? But you 're my master, and I must do as you please. Only, take my word, you will be sorry for this afterward."

With that he went to the tree and, with one or two powerful blows with his horn, made a hole large enough for the unhappy prisoners to creep out. Two more sheepish, miserable wretches than those half-starved brothers of his, Hans had never seen. They fell at his feet and thanked him again and again for delivering them. They promised never to do anything unkind or selfish again, and each assured Hans that he had always liked him far more than he had liked the other brother.

Their protestations of affection rather disgusted Hans, only, as he was a good-hearted boy himself, he could not help being moved by them. He then told his brothers in what state he had left his mother, and how he was to be taken by the unicorn to get the sparkling golden water.

"Oh!" cried the brothers, "can't you take us, too?"

The unicorn thought it time to interfere. "No one can be taken there, but the owner of the crystal ball," he said. "Come, master, it is time for you to mount."

Hans clambered nimbly into his seat on the unicorn's back. "Wait for me here," he called out to his brothers. "I shall not be long." Then Hans shut his eyes, held his breath, and grasped the unicorn tightly by the mane. It was as well that he did so, for the unicorn gave a bound that carried him over the tops of the highest trees, and would certainly have thrown him off unless he had been very firmly seated. Three such bounds did he take, and then he paused and said to Hans, "Now you may open your eyes." Hans found himself in a desolate, rocky valley, without a trace of vegetation — unless the forest of dead trees, which clothed the valley on every side, might be taken as vegetation. In the midst of the valley there sprang up a fountain of water, which sparked with such intense brilliancy that Hans was unable at first to look upon it.

"There, master," said the unicorn, turning his head, "this is the fountain of sparkling golden water. Dismount, and fill your flask. But take care that you do not allow your hand to touch the water. If it does it will be turned into gold, and will never become flesh and blood again."

Hans slipped from his seat and, flask in hand, approached the fountain. The ground on which he walked was sand, but as he drew nearer the fountain, he noticed that the sand kept growing brighter until he felt that he was walking upon what he guessed rightly to be veritable gold dust. Hans thrust a

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handful of this dust into his pocket, and also one or two moderate-sized stones that he found, which, like the sand, had been changed, by the spray coming from the fountain, into pure gold. He tried to be as careful as possible in filling the flask; but, notwithstanding all his care, the top joint of his little finger touched the water, and in an instant became gold. However, he had his flask full of sparkling golden water, the flask itself now, of course, golden, and he felt that the top joint of his little finger was a small price to pay for all this.

"Now, master," said the unicorn when Hans got back, "do you still intend to return to those brothers of yours? Or shall I put you out of the forest at some other point?"

"Certainly," replied Hans; "I intend to return to them. You heard them say how sorry they were for all the unkindness they had shown to my mother and me. I know they mean to do better for the future. Besides, I promised them to come back."

The unicorn said nothing, but grunted in a discouraging manner, and motioned to Hans to get on his back. When he was seated the unicorn said:

"Since this is your wish, you must have it. I have, however, three pieces of advice to give you. On your way home your brothers will offer to carry the flask — do not let them do so; also do not let them get behind you for a moment; and thirdly, guard the crystal ball with the utmost care. I can't go with you beyond the verge of the forest of dead trees. One visit, and only one, is permitted to the fountain. You therefore can never come here again. But if ever you need me sorely, crush the crystal ball, and I will be with you. Now shut your eyes, we must be off."

Three bounds brought them to the side of Fritz and Franz, and Hans having thanked the unicorn warmly for his kindness, the three brothers began to retrace their steps homeward. Now, during Hans's absence at the fountain, Fritz and Franz had been devising how they might rob him of the flask of sparkling golden water.

"It is disgusting," they said to one another, "that this wretched little Hans should beat us both. He will only waste the water in buying things for his mother, while it would make us Count and Burgomaster."

As soon, therefore, as they were out of sight of the unicorn, Fritz and Franz begged and prayed Hans to allow one of them to carry the flask.

"You 've had all the trouble of getting the water," they said; "we ought at least to be allowed the honour of helping you carry it. Besides, are we not your servants now that you are so rich? It is not suitable for you to do all the work." But Hans remembered the unicorn's words, and held firmly to his flask.

"No," he said, "thank you; but I 'll carry it myself." Then Fritz and Franz pretended to get sulky and tried to drop behind, but Hans would not allow this, either. The consequence was that the three made very slow progress homeward. Toward the evening they came to a deep stream, which they had to re-cross. It was only fordable at one point, as they all knew, because they had, of course, already crossed it before. Hans stood aside to allow Fritz and Franz to go on first, but each of them went in a little way, and ran back, saying that they were afraid of being drowned.

"What nonsense," said Hans, who was getting a little impatient at the delay; "it 's quite shallow," and, forgetting the unicorn's warning, he entered the stream first. Fritz and Franz did not miss the opportunity. Each took a large stone and struck Hans violently on the head. Then as he fell back senseless into the water, Fritz snatched the flask from off the belt to which it was attached, and Franz thrust with his foot Hans's body farther into the river, so that the current should carry it away, and, laughing at their own cleverness, the two proceeded to cross the ford.

Now, naturally enough, lads like Fritz and Franz do not care to trust each other very far. As soon, therefore, as they reached the other side of the stream, Franz produced his bottle, and demanded of Fritz his share of the sparkling golden water. Fritz, who intended to keep it all to himself, proposed that they should put off sharing it till later. Franz would not hear of this. He knew, only too well, what Fritz intended. This led to a wrangle, which ended in a fight between the two, in which the sparkling golden water was spilled, partly over Fritz's right hand, and the remainder over Franz's left foot. The brothers first realized what had happened to them by Fritz finding that he could not close his fist to strike, and Franz finding that he could not raise his foot to kick. The discovery sobered them in an instant. There they stood, one with a hand and the other with a foot of solid gold, and the golden flask with them; but the water, the precious sparkling golden water, lost forever. Fritz was the first to recover himself.

"Well," he said, "thank goodness I have a couple of feet left me. I shall be off, I can't wait for you. You must hobble on as best you can, or stay here and starve," and he was on the point of leaving Franz to his fate, when the latter caught him by the collar.

"If I 've only one foot, I have two hands," cried he, "and I don't intend to let you leave me behind. No, no; we must go together or not at all."

Fritz was obliged to submit, as it was a case of two hands against one; and he and Franz, arm in arm as though they were the most affectionate brothers, made their way slowly to the nearest town. There they had to submit to have hand and foot cut off. The operation hurt them very much indeed, but they sold the gold for a good sum of money to the goldsmith. With that, and with what they got for the flask, Fritz was able to buy his Countship, although he could never hunt owing to the loss of his right hand, and Franz was able to buy his Burgomastership, although the loss of his foot prevented his walking properly in processions. Neither of them, of course, gave a thought to their mother.

Now we must return to poor Hans, whom we left floating down the stream — senseless, and to all appearance dead. He was not dead, however, although the blows which his brothers had inflicted were very severe ones. He was only stunned, and fortunately he did not float far enough to be drowned. His body came into a back eddy of the stream and drifted gently on to a shelving bank of white sand. The cold water soon had the effect of bringing him to his senses so far as to enable him to crawl on to the land. It was, however, some hours before he was able to recall the past events. When he remembered them he gave way to despair. All the pains he had taken to win the sparkling golden water were thrown away. He might not return to get more — the unicorn had told him that. His mother would be as badly off as ever. Above all, he had the bitter disappointment of feeling that his brothers had deceived him. Then he bethought him of the crystal ball. Taking it from his pocket, he placed it on a large stone, and taking another stone struck it with all his force. A report like that of a cannon followed, and at the same instant the unicorn stood before him.

"I warned you of what would happen," he said to Hans. "You would have done much better if you had left your brothers in the tree. Now let me see what can be done for you. First of all, rub that dockleaf, which is touching your right hand, on the wound in your head." Hans did as he was told, and his head became as sound as ever. "Now," said the unicorn, "you must go straight home to your mother and bring her to the city of White Towers, and stay there till you hear from me again."

"But," said Hans, with tears in his eyes, "how can I do that? My mother is much too ill to move, and I have lost the sparkling golden water which was to have made her well and strong."

"Did not I see you," asked the unicorn, "put some sand and stones of pure gold into your pocket as you went to the fountain? There will be more than enough to meet all your expenses. Do as I tell you," and the unicorn, saying this, disappeared.

Hans, greatly cheered, set off once more, and finished his journey home without any further adventures. The gold that he had with him, not only enabled him to provide the comforts and necessaries which his mother required, but he was able also to reward Uncle Stoltz for his kindness. When his mother was strong enough to travel, Hans hired a wagon, and they set off by easy stages for the city of White Towers, there to await further news from the unicorn.

Now, the city of White Towers was at that time attracting from far and wide every one who wanted to make his fortune. The Princess of the city was the loveliest Princess in the world, and the richest and the most powerful. She had given out that she would marry any one, whoever it might be, king or beggar, who would tell her truly in the morning the dream that she had dreamed in the night. But whoever should compete and fail, was to forfeit all his fortune, be whipped through the streets and out of the gate, and banished from the city on pain of death. If, however, he had no fortune to forfeit, he was to be whipped back again and sold into slavery. The terms were hard; but many tried and failed, and many more, undeterred by the punishment which they constantly saw being inflicted on the others, were waiting their turn to compete. Among these latter were Count Fritz and Burgomaster Franz. These two met very often in the streets of the city, but they could never forget their quarrel over the sparkling golden water and when they met they always looked in opposite directions. Now, Fritz and Franz had made themselves hated by all with whom they had to deal; Fritz by his tyranny over the poor in the district in which his property lay, and Franz by his injustice as Burgomaster. The former used to grind down his people so as to extract the last penny from them; the latter used to make his judgments depend on the amount of bribe he received from the suitors. Everybody, therefore, hoped that both Fritz and Franz would fail to tell the Princess her dreams, and would have to pay the penalty.

Hans and his mother arrived at the city of White Towers on the evening before the day on which Fritz was to try his fortune. They heard on all sides that the "One-armed Count," as he was called, was to be the next competitor; but, of course, they had no idea that this "One-armed Count" was Fritz. The consequence was that, when they found themselves next day in the great square, where the whole population of the city assembled to see the trial, they were amazed beyond measure to see Fritz, marching jauntily along, quite confident of success, dressed in his very smartest clothes, to the platform on which the Princess and her ladies and her courtiers were assembled. Fritz felt sure that he would win, for this reason: There was an old woman living in a cottage near his castle, who was said to be a witch. Fritz had ordered her to be seized and put to the most cruel tortures, in order to force her to say what the Princess was going to dream on the night before the day fixed for his trial. This was very silly of him, as the old woman might be a witch ten times over, and yet not be able to tell him that. But cruel, wicked people often are silly. This poor old woman screamed out some nonsense in her agony which Fritz took to be the answer he required. He smiled, therefore, in a self-confident fashion as he bowed low before the princess and awaited her question. She asked it in a clear bell-like voice, which somehow caused Hans's heart, when he heard it, to beat a good deal quicker than before.

"Sir Count, what did I dream last night?"

"Your Highness dreamed," was the reply, "that the moon came down to earth and kissed you."

The princess gently shook her head, and in a moment Fritz found himself in the hands of her guards, with his coat stripped off his back, and his hands bound behind him. The first lash made him cry for mercy; but the Princess had already gone, and the soldiers, whose duty it was to inflict the whipping, were not much disposed to show mercy to the "One-armed Count." They laid on their blows well, driving the unlucky Fritz through the streets till the gate was reached, through which, with a final shower of blows, he was thrust, with the warning not to return thither, but to beg his way henceforth through the world. Of all who watched the proceedings, none seemed so delighted with the result as Franz. He followed, hobbling after his unhappy brother as close as the soldiers would allow, and kept jeering and laughing at him all the way. This was easy for him to do, notwithstanding the fact that he had to go on crutches, because good care was taken to make Fritz's progress through the streets as slow as possible. In addition, therefore, to the blows, Fritz had to endure the sight of Franz's grinning face, and to listen to such remarks as: "Who thought he was going to win the Princess?" — "Will your Highness remember your poor brother, the Burgomaster?" — "Who lost the sparkling golden water?" — and so on.

With very different feelings had Hans watched the proceedings. When he saw his brother stripped for beating, he forgot all about the wrongs he had sustained, and only thought what he could do to help the sufferer. He tried to bribe the soldiers to deal gently with Fritz; but when he found it was of no avail, he hastened to the city gate so as to meet his brother outside and comfort him when the punishment was over. Hans found Fritz, as indeed was natural under the circumstances, more surly and ill-tempered than ever. He appeared startled for a moment at seeing Hans, whom he thought dead, alive and well; but he set to work blubbering again immediately, and rubbing his back with his one hand. Hans gave him what money he could afford, which Fritz took without saying "Thank you," and went his way.

Next day it was Franz's turn to try and win the Princess. Franz felt just as certain of succeeding as Fritz had been. A certain necromancer in Franz's town had been a party in a suit which came before the Burgomaster's court. All the evidence which was brought forward told against him, but the necromancer promised Franz, as a bribe, if he would decide in his favour, to tell him by means of his art the true secret of the Princess's dream. Franz swallowed the bait greedily, and gave his unjust decision. Now, in order that the necromancer might not fail him, Franz had determined not to let him out of his sight till the day of trial. Very early in the morning of that day the necromancer came to Franz and said: "Last night the Princess dreamed so-and-so — will your worship allow me to go away now?" Franz, on hearing the dream, skipped with delight, forgetting about his one foot, and tumbled down on the floor. However, he did not mind that, and gave the necromancer leave to depart; which that worthy did in great haste. Franz was so impatient that he was in his place, in front of the platform, long before the Princess arrived. He could hardly wait for her to put the formal question before he blurted out:

"Your Highness dreamed that you were walking in your garden, and that all the trees and shrubs bore gold and silver leaves."

The Princess shook her head. "A very pretty dream," she said; "but it was not mine." So Franz had to suffer the same punishment as Fritz, and nobody was at all sorry. He was likewise thrust out of the city gate, bawling between his howls for some one to bring him the necromancer. Hans found him there, and tried to comfort him, as he had tried to comfort Fritz, and with about the same result. When Hans had returned to the inn, where he and his mother were staying, he was met with the news that a stranger was waiting to see him. He went in and found the huntsman who had given him the pellet which turned into the crystal ball.

"Hans," said the huntsman, as soon as Hans entered the room, "the unicorn has sent me to you. It 's your turn now to try to win the Princess."

Hans turned pale at the thought.

"I would give my life to win her," he said, earnestly, "but I am certain to fail, and then what will my poor mother do? I have no property to be confiscated, and, of course, I shall be sold into slavery."

"Don't talk of failure," said the huntsman cheerily; "the way to success is to forget that there is such a word as failure. Now I 'll tell you my plan. The Princess, as you know, or as you very likely don't know, is devoted to curious animals of all kinds. I will change you into a white mouse with a gold claw, and will offer you to the Princess for sale. She has never seen or heard of such a creature as a white mouse with a gold claw before, and will be sure to buy you. Then it will be your fault if matters don't go smoothly with you. You have only to keep your ears open and use your wits. Now, first of all, we must enter you for to-morrow's competition."

Hans longed to try his luck with the Princess, and as this plan seemed a promising one — indeed, it was the only one he could think of — he agreed to try it. However, he determined not to tell his mother anything about the matter, as he knew how terrified she would be at the thought of his failure. The first thing, as the huntsman had said, was for him to present himself to the Princess as candidate for her hand. He accordingly did so, and found her seated on her throne, surrounded by the lords and ladies of her court, glittering in jewels and dressed in magnificent apparel. Hans felt rather shy as he marched up the splendid room, amongst all these grandly dressed people, in his shabby old clothes; but he put as good a face on it as he could, and when he stopped before the throne and looked into the Princess's eyes, all his shyness vanished. He was conscious of nothing but a strong determination to win her for himself, or to perish in the attempt. The court usher announced his name and purpose in a loud tone.

"This is Hans, the charcoal-burner, who has undertaken to tell the Princess her dream to-morrow morning, or to pay the penalty."

When the Princess looked at Hans and saw what a nice, open-faced boy he was, she did all she could to persuade him to give up the attempt. She pointed out to him how many had tried and failed — how little chance there was of his succeeding. She could not bear, she said, to think of his being whipped publicly and sold into slavery. She offered him, if he would withdraw, the important post of general manager of the court menagerie. But neither this offer nor the prayers of the Princess could move Hans.

"Now, that I have seen you face to face, Princess," said he, "I would rather die twenty times over than give up the undertaking."

The Princess was obliged to allow Hans to enter his name for to-morrow's trial, although it made her very unhappy. Her heart told her that he was the one of all her suitors whom she would most wish to succeed; but she felt that he would be certain to fare as the others had done; and so when the formality was over, and Hans had left, she dismissed the court, shut herself up in her room, and said she would be at home to nobody for the rest of the day.

As soon as Hans got back, the huntsman took a cup of water, muttered some strange words over it, and sprinkled Hans with the contents. He was conscious of a curious change taking place in him, and before he could quite make out what it was, he found that he was a white mouse with a gold claw. The huntsman put him in a box and carried him to the palace to sell him to the Princess. When he arrived there the porter refused to admit him.

"No!" he said, "the Princess had given out that she would see no one that day. It was more than his place was worth to admit the stranger." However, by dint of flattering words and a handsome present slipped into his hands, the porter was persuaded to send for one of the Princess's ladies. When she came and saw the white mouse with the gold claw, she said she was sure that her mistress would be so delighted with his beautiful little curiosity that she would pardon having her orders disobeyed for once. Only, the huntsman must remain where he was; she would take the white mouse to the Princess herself. To this the huntsman consented; and the long and short of it was that the Princess sent him a handsome sum for the mouse; and Hans found himself established as her newest favourite. The Princess was so pleased with her pet that, when she went to bed, she placed him in a cabinet in her room, the door of which she left open — because he was so tame that she had no fear of his attempting to run away. Hans was wondering how he was to find out the Princess's dream in this situation, when his mistress woke up, laughing heartily, and called for her lady in waiting to come to her.

"I've had such a curious dream," she said. "I dreamed that I was married to a man with a golden top-joint to his little finger. I suppose that it was the white mouse with the gold claw which put the idea into my head. But," and here the Princess's voice grew very sad, "how will that poor boy ever guess this dream to-morrow?"

Hans waited impatiently for all to be quiet, then he slipped out of his cabinet, and finding the door shut, ran up the curtain of the window, which was fortunately open, and getting on a rose which clambered up outside the wall, ran down it and made the best of his way to the inn. There he found the huntsman waiting for him, to whom he told all that had taken place, and who in a few seconds changed him back to his own shape.

An emormous concourse of people was assembled next day to see the trial. Very pale and sad the Princess looked as she sat prepared to put the question to Hans. He waited respectfully till she had spoken, and then, without saying a word, held out his hand to her. Her eye fell on the golden top-joint of his little finger. She cried out with delight, and, seizing his hand in hers, turned to the people and said: "Hans has guessed right, and he shall be my husband."

And all the people raised a glad shout, "Long live Prince Hans!"

"Oh!" said the Princess to Hans, "how I wish my brother were here to share our happiness!"

"He is here," said the huntsman, who had thrust his way to the front; and, throwing off his huntsman's disguise, he appeared dressed as a Prince. Then, turning to Hans, he said:

"A mighty magician, the enemy of our family, condemned me, because I would not give him my sister in marriage, to take the form of a unicorn, and to guard the sparkling golden water. Twice every year, for a fortnight at a time, I was allowed to resume my human shape. It was then that I came to your hut in the forest, and gave you the token by which to win your way to the fountain. The spell laid upon me was only to be raised when some one guessed aright my sister's dream, and so won her to wife. Thanks to you, brother Hans, the magician's power is at an end."

Hans and the Princess were married, and after the ceremony the Prince went off to his own kingdom. Hans's mother had a beautiful suite of apartments in the palace assigned to her, and Uncle Stoltz was not forgotten, but was provided for comfortably for life; and they all lived happily ever afterward.

As for Fritz and Franz, they were so selfish and cruel, that there was nothing to be done with them but to send them back into the forest again to burn charcoal; and for all I know they are burning charcoal there still.

Destiny

ONCE upon a time there were two brothers who lived together in the same household. One attended to everything, while the other was an indolent fellow, who occupied himself only with eating and drinking. Their harvests were always magnificent; they had cattle, horses, sheep, pigs, bees, and all other things in great abundance.

The elder, who did everything about the estate, said to himself one day:

"Why should I toil for this lazy fellow? It would be better that we should separate. I will work for myself alone, and he can do whatever he pleases." So he said to his brother:

"Brother, it is unjust that I should take charge of all whilst thou wilt aid me in nothing, and thinkest only of eating and drinking. It is better that we should part."

The other tried to turn him from his project, saying:

"Brother, do not do this. We get on so well together. Thou hast all in thy hands — not only what is thine, but what is mine, and thou knowest that I am always contented with what thou doest, and with what thou orderest."

But the elder persisted in his resolution so firmly that the younger was obliged to give up, and said:

"Since it is so I have no ill-will toward thee. Make the division as seemeth good to thee."

The division made, each one ordered his life as he thought good. The indolent brother took a herder for his cattle and horses, a shepherd for his sheep, a goatherd for his goats, a swineherd for his pigs, a keeper for his bees, and said to each of them:

"I confide my goods to thee, and may God watch over thee."

And he continued to live in his house without any more care than he had ever done.

The elder on the contrary laboured for his half of the property as much as he had ever done for the common good. He kept his herds himself, having an eye on everything, but in spite of all his care he had ill success on every side.

From day to day everything turned out badly with him, so that at last he became so poor that he had not even a pair of sandals, and was obliged to go barefooted. Then he said to himself:

"I will go to my brother's, and see how the world wags with him."

His way led him across a meadow where a flock of sheep was grazing, and as he drew near he saw that the sheep had no shepherd. Near them, however, a beautiful young girl was seated, spinning a thread of gold.

After having saluted the maiden with a "God protect thee," he asked her whose were the sheep, and she answered:

"To whom I belong, belong the sheep also."

"And who art thou?" he continued.

"I am thy brother's fortune," she answered.

Then the traveller was seized with wrath and envy, and cried out:

"And where is *my* fortune?"

The maiden answered him: "Ah, she is far from thee."

"Can I find her?" he asked.

She answered: "Thou canst find her — only look for her."

When he had heard these words, and saw that the sheep were so beautiful that nothing finer could be imagined, he did not care to go farther to see the other flocks, but went direct to his brother, who as soon as he had seen him took pity on him, and said, weeping:

"Why hast thou hidden thyself from me for so long a time?"

Then seeing that he was in rags and barefooted he gave him a pair of sandals and some money.

After having remained three days with his brother the poor fellow departed to return home, but once arrived at the house he threw a sack over his shoulders, put a morsel of bread in it, took a stick in his hand, and set out into the world to seek his fortune.

Having travelled a long time he found himself at last in a deep forest where he met a wretched old woman asleep in a thicket. He began to beat the ground with his stick to wake up the old woman, and at last gave her a blow on the back. However, she scarcely moved even then, and half opening her drowsy eyes, said to him:

"Thou mayest thank God that I was asleep, for if I had been awake thou wouldst not have had those sandals."

Then he said to her: "Who art thou then, who wouldst have hindered me from having these sandals?"

The old hag answered him: "I am thy fortune."

Hearing these words he beat his breast, crying: "What! thou art my fortune! May God exterminate thee! Who gave thee to me?"

And the old hag said to him: "It was Destiny."

"Where is Destiny?"

"Go and seek for him," she answered, going to sleep again.

Then he departed and went to seek for Destiny.

After a long, long journey he arrived at last at another wood, and in this wood he found a hermit of whom he asked if he could not give him some news of Destiny?

The hermit answered him: "Climb that mountain, and thou wilt arrive at his castle, but when thou reachest Destiny be careful not to speak to him. Do only what thou seest him do, until he speaks to thee."

The traveller thanked the hermit, took his way up the mountain, and when he had arrived at the castle of Destiny what wonderful things he saw!

The luxury was absolutely royal. There was a crowd of servants, always in motion and doing nothing. As for Destiny, he was supping at a magnificent table. When the stranger saw this he seated himself also at table and ate with the master of the house. After supper Destiny went to bed and the traveller did the same. Toward midnight terrible noise was heard in the castle, and in the midst of the noise a voice crying:

"Destiny, Destiny — so many souls have come into the world to-day. Give them something at thy good pleasure."

And Destiny arose, opened a golden coffer, and threw into the room a shower of shining ducats, saying:

"Such as I am to-day, so shall you be all your lives."

At daybreak the grand castle vanished, and there took its place an ordinary house, but one in which nothing was wanting. When evening came Destiny sat down to supper again, his guest did the same, and no one spoke a word. After supper both went to bed as before.

Toward midnight again commenced the terrible noise in the castle, and in the midst of the tumult a voice crying:

"Destiny, Destiny, so many souls have seen the light to-day. Give them something at thy good pleasure."

Destiny arose and opened a silver coffer, but this time there were no ducats in it, only silver money mixed with a few pieces of gold. Destiny threw this silver upon the ground, saying:

"Such as I am to-day, so shall you be all your lives."

At daybreak the house had vanished, and there appeared in its place another smaller one. So passed each night; each morning the house became smaller until at last it was only a miserable hut. Destiny then took a spade and began to dig up the earth; his guest did the same, and they dug all day long. When evening came Destiny took a crust of hard bread, broke it in two, and gave half to his companion. This was all their supper, and when they had eaten they went to bed.

Toward midnight again commenced the terrible noise, and in the midst of it a voice was heard, crying:

"Destiny, Destiny, so many souls have come into the world this night. Give them something at thy good pleasure."

Destiny arose, opened a coffer, and began to throw out pebbles among which were mixed some small money, saying as he did so:

"Such as I am to-day, so shall you be all your lives."

When morning came the hut was changed again to a grand palace as it had been on the first day. Then for the first time Destiny spoke to his guest, and said to him:

"Why hast thou come to me?"

The traveller then related his miseries in detail, and said that he had come to ask of Destiny himself, why he had given him so evil a fortune.

Destiny answered him:

"Thou didst see that the first night I sowed ducats and what followed thereon. Such as I am on the night when a man is born, such that man will be all his life. Thou wert born on a night of poverty, and thou wilt remain always poor. Thy brother, on the contrary, came into the world in a happy hour, and happy he will remain to the end. But since thou hast taken so much trouble to find me I will tell thee how thou mayst help thyself. Thy brother has a daughter named Miliza, who is as fortunate as her father. Take her for thy wife when thou shalt return to thine own country, and all that thou shalt acquire thereafter, be careful to say belongs to her."

The traveller thanked Destiny many times and departed.

When he had returned to his own country he went straight to his brother, and said to him:

"Brother, give me Miliza. Thou seest that without her I am alone in the world."

And the brother answered: "It pleases me well. Miliza is thine."

Straightway the bridegroom took his brother's daughter to his house, and he became very rich, but he was always careful to say: "All that I have belongs to Miliza."

One day he went into the fields to see his wheat, which was so fine that there was nothing like it in the whole country around. A traveller passed along the way, and said to him:

"Whose is this wheat?"

And the elder brother, without thinking, answered: "It is mine."

But scarcely had he spoken than a spark was seen in the wheat and in an instant it was all on fire. Quickly he ran after the traveller, and cried out:

"Stop, my friend, this wheat is not mine. It belongs to Miliza, my brother's daughter."

The fire was instantly extinguished, and thenceforth the elder brother was happy — thanks to Miliza.

The Queen of the Golden Mines

ONCE on a time there was a King of Ireland, and he had three sons, Teddy, Billy, and Jack. Teddy and Billy were the two eldest, and they were brave, able boys. But Jack was the youngest, a *gauchy*, *dawnie* sort of a lad that was good for nothing only feeding fowls and doing odd turns about the house. When they grew up to be men, Teddy and Billy one day said they 'd go away to travel and see the world, for they 'd only be good-for-nothing omadhauns if they 'd stay here all their lives. Their father said that was good, and so off the both of them started. And that night when they halted from their travelling, who does they see coming up after them, but Jack; for it seems he commenced to think *long*, when he found them gone, and he was that lonesome that he could n't stay behind them. And there he was dressed in his old tattered clothes, a spec-*tacle* for the world, and a disgrace to them; for of course, they were done off with the best of everything — rale gentlemen, as becomed their father's sons. They said to themselves they 'd be long sorry to let that picthur with them — for he *was* a picthur, and no doubt of it — to be an upcast to them wherever they 'd go. So before they started on again next mornin' they tied Jack to a millstone, and left him there. That night again, when they went to stop from their travellin', what would you have of it but there was me brave Jack once more, not a hundred parches behind them, and he dragging the millstone after him. Teddy and Billy said this was too bad entirely; and next day, before they started again, they tied another millstone to him, and they said, "Well, you 'll not get away from here in a hurry anyhow, boy." So on they went again on their journey, laughing and cracking jokes, and telling passages, to pass the time; but that night again, when they went to stop from their journey, lo! and behold ye, who does they see coming tearing after them but my poor Jack, once more, with the two millstones dragging behind him. Then they were in a quandhary entirely, and they begun to consider what was best to do with him, for they saw there was no holdin' or tyin' of him, or keepin' him back at all, at all, for if they were to tie him to a mountain in the mornin', he 'd be afther them with the mountain rattling at his heels again night. So they come to the conclusion that it was best to take Jack with them, and purtend him to be their hired boy, and not their brother at all. Of course, me poor Jack, that was always agreeable, was only too ready to go on these terms; and on the three of them went, afore them, till at length they reached the King of England's castle. When the King of England heard Teddy and Billy was the King of Ireland's two sons, he give them *cead mile failte*,* was plaised and proud to see them, ordhered them to be made much of, then opened his hall door, an' asked in the nobility an' genthry of the whole counthry-side to a big dinner and ball that he gave in their honour. But what do you have of it, but in the middle of the ball does n't Teddy have a fallout with the King of England's son, and sthruck him, and then that was the play! The hubbub and *hooroosh* got up, and the King ordhered the ball to be stopped, and had Teddy taken pris'ner, and Billy and Jack ordhered away out of the kingdom. Billy and Jack went away, vexed in their hearts at leaving Teddy in jail, and they travelled away till they came to France, and the King of France's castle. Here, when the King of France heard that Billy, the King of Ireland's son, had come to see him, he went out and welcomed him, an' asked in himself and Jack to come in and make a visit with him. And, like the King of England, he thought he could n't make too much of the King of Ireland's sons, and threw open his hall door and asked in the whole nobility and clergy and genthry of all the counthry-side into a great dinner and ball given in Billy's honour. But lo! and behould ye, does n't it turn up at this ball, too, that Billy had a squabble with the King of France's son and struck him, and the ball was stopped by the King's ordhers, and the people sent home, and Billy taken prisoner, and there was poor Jack now left all alone. The King of France, taking pity on Jack, employed him as a boy. And Jack was getting along very well at Court, and the king and him used to have very great yarns together entirely. At length a great war broke out betwixt France and Germany; and the King of France was in great trouble, for the Germans were slaughtering and conquering all before them. Says Jack, says he, to the King one day, "I wish I had only half a rajimint of your men, and you 'd see what I would do." Instead of this the King gave him a whole army, and in less nor three days there was n't a German alive in the whole kingdom of France. It was the king was the thankful man to Jack for this good action, and said he never could forget it to him. After that Jack got into great favour at court, and used to have long chats with the Queen herself. But Jack soon found that he never could come into the Queen's presence that he did n't put her in tears. He asked her one day what was the meaning of this, and she told him that it was because she never looked on him that he did n't put her in mind of her infant son that had, twelve months before, been carried away by the Queen of the Golden Mines, and who she had never heard tale or tidings of from that day to this.

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* Hundred thousand welcomes.

"Well, be this and be that," says Jack, says he, "but I 'm not the man to leave ye in your trouble if I can help it; and be this and be that over again," says he, "but I won't sleep two nights in the one bed, or eat two meals' meat in the one house, till I find out the Queen of the Golden Mines' Castle, and fetch back your infant son to ye — or else I 'll not come back livin'."

"Ah," says the Queen, "that would never do!" and "Ah," says the King, "that would never do at all, at all!" They pointed out and showed to him how a hundred great knights had gone on the same errand before him, and not one of them ever come back livin', and there was no use in him throwin' away his life, for they could n't afford to lose him. But it was all no use; Jack was bound on going, and go he would. So, the very next morning he was up at cock-crow, and afther leavin' goodbye with the whole of them, and leavin' the King and the Queen in tears, he started on his journey. And he travelled away afore him, inquiring his way to the Castle of the Queen of the Golden Mines; and he travelled and tramped for many a weary day, and for many a weary week, and for many a weary month; till at last, when it was drawing on twelve months from the day he left the Castle of the King of France, one day tor'st evening he was travelling through a thick wood, when he fell in with an old man, resting, with a great bundle of sticks by his side; and "Me poor old man," says Jack, says he, "that 's a mighty great load entirely for a poor man of your years to be carryin'. Sure, if ye 'll allow me, I 'll just take them with me for ye, as far as you 're goin'."

"Blissin's on ye!" says the ould man; "an' an ould man's blissin' atop of that; an' thanky."

"Nobbut, thanky, yerself, for your good wishes," says Jack, says he, throwin' the bundle of sticks on his shoulder, an' marchin' on by the ould man's side. And they thravelled away through the wood till they come at last to the ould man's cabin. And the ould man axed Jack to come in and put up with him for the night, and such poor accommodations as he had, Jack was heartily welcome to them. Jack thanked him and went in and put up for the night with him, and in the morning Jack told the ould man the arrand he was on and axed if he 'd diract him on his way to the Queen of the Golden Mines' Castle. Then the ould man took out Jack, and showed him a copper castle glancing in the sun, on a hill opposite, and told him that was his journey's end.

"But, me poor man," says he, "I would strongly advise ye not to go next or near it. A hundred knights went there afore you on the self-same errand, and their heads are now stuck on a hundred spears right afore the castle; for there 's a fiery dragon guards it that makes short work of the best of them."

But seeing Jack was n't to be persuaded off his entherprise nohow, he took him in and gave him a sword that carried ten men's strength in it along with that of the man that wielded it.

And he told Jack, if he was alive again' night, and not killed by the dhragon, to come back to his cabin. Jack thanked him for the sword, and promised this, and then he set out for the castle. But lo! and behold ye, no sooner did Jack come anear the castle than a terrible great monsther of a dhragon entirely, the wildest ever Jack seen or heard tell of, come out from the castle, and he opened his mouth as wide as the world from side to side, and let out a roar that started the old gray eagle on top of Croaghpathrick mountain at home in Ireland. Poor Jack thrimbled from head to foot—and small wonder he did — but, not a bit daunted, he went on to meet the dhragon, and no sooner were they met than he to it and the dhragon to it, and they fought and sthrove long and hard, the wildest fight by far that poor Jack ever entered into, and they fought that way from early mornin' till the sun went down, at one time Jack seemin' to be gettin' the betther of the dhragon, and the next minute the dhragon gettin' the betther of Jack; and when the sun went down they called a truce of peace till next day; and Jack dragged himself back to the cabin in small hopes of being able to meet the dhragon more, for he was covered over with wounds from head to foot. But when he got to the cabin the ould man welcomed him back alive, and he took down a little bottle of ointment and rubbed it over Jack, and no sooner did he rub it over him than Jack's wounds were all healed as well as ever again. And Jack went out a new man the next mornin' to give the dhragon another try for it this day. And just as on the day afore the fiery dhragon come down the hill meeting poor Jack, and the dhragon opened his mouth as wide as the world, and gave a roar that shook the nails on the toes of the great gray eagle on top of Croaghpathrick mountain at home in Ireland, and then he fell on Jack, and Jack fell on him, and the dhragon to it, and Jack to it; and the dhragon gave Jack his fill, and Jack gave the dhragon his fill; and if they fought hard the day afore they fought double as hard this day, and the dhragon put very sore on Jack entirely till the sun went down. Then again they agreed on a truce of peace till the next mornin', and Jack dragged himself back as best he could to the cabin again, all covered over with cuts and bruises, and streaming down with blood. And when he came there the ould man took down a little bottle of ointment and rubbed Jack over with it, and he was healed as well as ever again. Next morning Jack was up quite fresh and ready for another day's battling, and the ould man told Jack that, win or lose, this day was like to end the battle. And he said if Jack happened (as God send) to come off victorious, he was to go into the castle and there he would find a great number of beautiful virgins running about in great confusion to prevent Jack from discovering their mistress the Queen of the Golden Mines, and every one of them axing, "Is it me ye want? Is it me ye want?" But he told Jack he was to heed none of them, but press through room after room till he come to the sixth room, and there he would find the Queen herself asleep, with the little child by her side. So Jack went meeting the dhragon this third day again, and the dhragon come meeting Jack. And he opened his mouth as wide as the world. and let a roar that rattled the eyes in the sockets of the great gray eagle on top of Croaghpathrick mountain at home in Ireland, and then fell on Jack, and Jack fell on him; and he to it, and Jack to it, and both of them to it; and if the fight was wild and terrible the first two days it was ten times wilder and terribler this day. And harder and harder it was getting the more they warmed to the work; and one time it was Jack was getting the better of the dhragon, and the next time it was the dhragon was getting the better of poor Jack; and at last coming on tor'st night the dhragon was putting very hard on Jack entirely, and it was very nearly being all over with him, when he stepped back, and gathering all his strength mounted into the air with one spring, and come down atop of the dhragon's head, and struck his sword into his heart, leaving him over dead. Then Jack went into the castle, and no sooner did he go in than there was lots of the most beautiful virgins, running in great commotion, and asking Jack, "Is it me ye want?" "Is it me ye want?" But Jack never heeded thim till he come into the sixth room, where he saw the beautiful Queen of the Golden Mines asleep, with the Queen of France's child asleep beside her. Jack bent over her and gave her one kiss, for she was a lovely picthur. Then he took up the child in his arms, and picking up a beautiful garter all glancing with diamonds, that was lying by the Queen's bedside, and taking with him a loaf of bread that could never be eaten out, a bottle of wine that could never be drunk out, and a purse that could never be emptied, he started away. He stopped that night with the ould man, who took down his bottle of ointment and healed up all the wounds Jack got that day. In the morning Jack started for France, leaving with the ould man to keep till the Queen of the Golden Mines would call for it, the purse that never could be emptied. When Jack reached France, and presented back to the Queen her darling child, that was the rejoicement and the joy! There was a great faist given, and at the faist Jack said he had a little wondher he fetched with him, that he 'd like to show; and he produced his bottle, and sent it round the prences, and nobility, and genthry that were all assembled at the faist, and axed them all to drink the Queen's health out of it. This they all did; and lo! and behold ye, when they had finished the bottle was as full as when they commenced; and they all said that bate all ever they knew or heerd tell of; and the King said it bate all ever he knew or heerd tell of, too, and that the same bottle would be of mighty great sarvice to him, to keep his troops in drink when he 'd go to war, and axed Jack on what tarms he'd part with it. Jack said he could n't part with it entirely, as it was n't his own, but if the King relaised his brother he 'd leave the bottle with him till such times as the Queen of the Golden Mines might call for it. The Queen agreed to this. Jack's brother was relaised, and himself and Jack started off for England. When they were come there the King of England gave a great faist in their honour, too, and at this faist Jack said he 'd like to show them a little wonder he fetched with him, and he produced the loaf, and axed the King to divide all round. And the King cut off the loaf, and divided all round, over all the prences and nobility and gentry that was there; and when he had finished they were all lost in wondherment, for the loaf was still as big as when the King commenced to cut. The King said that would be the grand loaf for feeding his troops whenever he went to war, and axed Jack what would he take to part with it. Jack said the loaf was n't his to part with, but if the King relaised his brother out of prison he 'd give him the loaf till such times as the Queen of the Golden Mines might call for it. The King agreed to this, and relaised Jack's other brother, and then the three of them started for home together. And when they were come near home the two older brothers agreed that Jack, when he 'd tell his story, would disgrace them, and they 'd put him to death. But Jack agreed if they 'd let him live he would go away and push his fortune, and never go back near home. They let him live on these conditions, and they pushed on home, where they were received with great welcomes, and told mortial great things entirely of all the great things they done while they were away. Jack come to the castle in disguise and got hired as a boy and lived there.

The Queen of the Golden Mines, when she woke up and learned of the young gentleman that had killed the dhragon, and carried off the child and the other things, and kissed her, said he must be a fine fellow entirely, and she would never marry another man if she could n't find him out. She got no rest till she started, herself and her virgins, and away to find out Jack. She first come to the old man, where she got her purse, and he directed her to the King of France. When she come to the Court of the King of France she got her bottle, and he said Jack went from there to go to see the King of England. From the King of England she got her loaf, and he diracted her to Ireland, telling her that Jack was no other than the King of Ireland's son. She lost no time then reaching the Court of the King of Ireland, where she demanded his son who had killed the fiery dhragon. The King sent out his eldest son, and he said it was him that had killed the fiery dhragon, and she asked him for tokens, but he could give none, so she said he was n't the man she wanted. Then the King's second son come out and said it was him killed the fiery dhragon. But he could n't show her no tokens either, so he would n't do. Then the King said he had no other son, but a good-for-nothing *droich* who went away somewhere and never come back; but that it was n't him anyhow, for he could n't kill a cockroach. She said she 'd have to see him, and converse with him, or otherwise she would n't go away till she 'd pull down his castle. Then the whole house was upside down, and they did n't know what to do. And Jack, who was doing something about the yards axed what it was all about; and they told him, and he axed to have a minute's convarsing with her. But they all laughed at him; and one gave him a knock, and another gave him a push, and another gave him a kick. And Jack never minded them one bit, but went out and said it was him that kilt the fiery dhragon. They all set up another big roar of a laugh at this. Then the Queen asked him to show his tokens, and Jack fetched from his pocket the beautiful garter, all shining with jewels, and held it up, and the Queen came and threw her arms about Jack's neck and kissed him, and said he was the brave man she 'd marry, and no other. And me brave Jack, to the astonishment of them all, confessed who he was, and got married to her, and was ever afther the King of the Golden Mines.

*The Deserter**

ONCE upon a time there was a deserter who was three times faithless to his colours. Twice had he undergone the punishment due to desertion; the third time he knew he was face to face with death. So he resolved to flee by night and hide himself by day in some ditch or thicket, for he was afraid that in the daylight he might be recognized and arrested.

One night, as he was hastening onward, he saw a glimmer of light in the distance, and thought to himself, "I will go toward that light; perhaps it will somehow help me out of my trouble."

When, however, he came up to that light all he saw was an opening just wide enough for him to creep into. The moment he was inside thick darkness fell upon him. He could find his way neither in nor out; but on groping around he at last came upon a staircase, up which he climbed and found himself in a passageway. Through this passageway he went for a long, long time, until at last he stumbled upon a door. He opened the door and stepped into a room, but it was pitch dark there too; so he groped all about until at last he stumbled upon another door and entered another room.

So on he went through eleven rooms, and finally reached the twelfth, where at last he found a lighted candle upon a table. The room was beautifully fitted up, and he thought within himself, "Come what come may, I shall make myself at home in this room."

So he stretched himself upon a couch. He lay there for a while lost in thought, when, lo and behold! the table began to lay itself. When the cloth was spread, all sorts of good cheer began to appear upon it.

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*From "The Russian Grandmother's Wonder Tales." Copyright, 1906, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

"Come what come may," he thought to himself again, "I am hungry." So he fell to and ate to his heart's content. When he had eaten all that he could swallow he threw himself upon the couch again and began to consider.

Suddenly three women entered, clothed entirely in black. One seated herself at the piano, while the two others danced. Tired as he was, when he saw this he arose and skipped about with them. After this entertainment they began to talk with him, speaking of one thing and another, and finally came round to the question how he might break the spell that bound them.

They told him the very way and manner of doing it, saying that he had nothing more nor less to do than to pass the night in a certain room which they would show him. A ghost would come there and pester him with all sorts of questions — who he was, how he had come there, and other things. But he must not say a mortal word to all these questions, not though the ghost tormented him in all sorts of ways; if he could only hold out in silence the ghost would vanish, and then he would feel not the least pain from all the torments he had been enduring.

Our deserter fell in with the proposition without further words, and the ladies escorted him, with the sound of music, to the fateful room and left him there alone. When they were gone he undressed himself, bolted the door securely, and lay down in bed. But he could not sleep, for his head throbbed with expectation of what was about to happen.

At eleven o'clock a sudden knock was heard at the door. He dared not make a sound, for he was firmly resolved to ransom himself, the ladies, and the enchanted castle; so he kept as still as a mouse. Again the knocking came, but he made no answer. At the third knock the door flew open, and in walked a gigantic form all clothed in flames.

The giant placed himself at the bedside and began to ask the man who he was and why he had come; but the deserter never uttered a word. Then the giant seized him, threw him upon the floor, and began to torment him; but no sound passed the sufferer's lips. At the stroke of twelve the ghost departed; with the words:

"Though you would n't tell to-day, you will to-morrow, when we all three come."

He spoke, the door flew open, closed again, and he was gone. The young man arose from the floor, lay down upon his bed, and fell sweetly asleep, without feeling the least harm.

Next morning came the three ladies, all in white up to their knees, and led him, with sound of music, back to the room where he had been on the previous day. They placed a chair for him and set a delicious breakfast before him. When he had plentifully breakfasted he fell asleep and snored till evening.

When he awoke he asked how late it was. The ladies replied that it was nine o'clock; and they gave him a good supper and led him again to the same room to sleep.

At the stroke of eleven some one knocked at the door. He made no sound, but at the third knock the door flew open and three ghosts entered. The one who had been there the night before asked him the same questions as before, but received no better answer. Then one of them seized him and flung him into one corner, and another into another, and so they tossed him about until the poor fellow lay helpless against the wall, all covered with blood.

When the clock struck twelve the spokesman said to him, "Though you won't answer to-night, you will to-morrow, when we all four come." With these words they disappeared.

He again lifted himself up, lay down upon his bed, and felt no harm. In the morning the three ladies came, all in white up to their girdles, and escorted him, to the sound of music, into the other room, where, after breakfast, he again fell asleep.

At night they again escorted him to his chamber to sleep. When they were gone he did not go to bed as usual, but began to consider how he might avoid the fearful torment in store for him. First he looked out at a window, but his gaze fell upon a frightful abyss enclosed by rocky precipices. He went to the second window, but there it was no better, but seemed to be even more fearful. So nothing was left him but to heap all the furniture of the room before the door, in hope thus to escape his tormentors. But he soon gave up this hope, for about midnight the knocking began. He made no answer, but at the third knock the door flew open and all the furniture returned to its own place.

The ghost who had before questioned him now began to repeat his questions, commanding him to tell who he was and how he came there; but the young man was not to be made to speak. Then the spokesman ordered one of his comrades to go below and bring up an anvil and four hammers, and when these had been brought, one of the ghosts blew up a fire and threw the young man upon it. When he was heated to a glow they laid him upon the anvil and beat him with hammers until he was as flat as paper. But with all this he was not to be forced to speak.

The time was up and the ghosts must go. Before they went they told him that he and all around him were blessed; and then the door flew open and they vanished. He again arose, laid himself upon the bed, and sank at once into slumber.

Next morning the three ladies, all in white from head to foot, came, with the sound of music, to thank him for ransoming them, and they gave him to choose among them for a wife. Now the youngest of them had grown nearest his heart, and he declared himself ready to marry her, not at once, but later, for first he wished to see something of the world.

This being the case, they gave him a ham, a wooden flask of wine, a loaf of bread, three dogs, and a pipe which hung by a golden chain, and they told him that these dogs would come to his aid in every time of need; he had only to call them by means of his pipe. And should he be tired, he had only to seat himself upon one of them. So he took all these things and went forth to see the world.

One day when he was travelling through a forest he arrived at a castle and turned aside to enter. But the steps which led up were of such a kind that he could not climb them; so he seated himself upon one of his dogs and the animal carried him up.

As he passed through the entrance he peeped through a window and saw a Tiger and his wife, who was combing his hair.

He went in to where they were, and the Tiger at once arose, led him from room to room, and showed him many wonderful things. Everything pleased the young man, except that the Tiger's wife kept the dogs shut up in a room apart.

When he entered the fourth room he went around it, gazing upon the many statues and paintings; and while thus doing he stepped upon a board which gave way and let him fall into a cellar where it was as dark as pitch. He groped around for a way of escape, but a damp, heavy wind seemed to sweep all around him, and first he would wound his hand and then his foot. So he thought to himself, "You won't come safely out of this!"

After a while the Tiger let himself down by a rope, butcher-knife in hand, intending to kill him. The young man begged for a half-hour's respite, that he might do penance for his sins. This was granted, but the time soon flew by, and the Tiger was already whetting his knife to stab him, when the young man sprang aside, and his hand met the chain upon which the pipe was hanging. He blew upon it, and quick as thought the dogs were on the spot. He set them upon the Tiger, but as they fell upon him the Tiger begged humbly for life, promising that his wife would draw him and his dogs up out of the cellar.

So it came to pass; but they were no sooner out than he again set the dogs upon the Tiger, who again began to beg, promising to give him a salve which had the power of fastening against the wall any one upon whose back it was rubbed, and keeping him there fast and firm until he chose to let him go.

The youth took the salve and went on farther, till he reached a city which was all shrouded in mourning. He entered and asked why every one was in mourning, and received answer that a fearful Dragon was to come that day and carry off the Emperor's daughter.

At this he laughed heartily, and said, "That may easily be helped; just go and announce to the Emperor that I am ready to ransom the Princess, if it is agreeable to him." This was announced, and the Emperor received him into the castle with great joy.

As the appointed time for the Dragon's coming had arrived, the young man placed himself in readiness. At the stroke of twelve the Dragon suddenly appeared, driving four horses. The young man was waiting for him, and as soon as the Dragon had taken the Princess by the hand to carry her off he spread the salve upon his back, pressed him against the wall, and set his dogs upon him. At the same time he belaboured him with the butt-end of his musket, till the Dragon was quite exhausted and began to beg off, promising to give a written agreement never again to molest the Princess. When he had written the paper in his own blood and signed it he vanished through the window.

Then the Emperor knew not what to do for joy. He offered his daughter to the soldier to wife, or, if he liked it better, the half of his kingdom. But the young man declined both offers and returned to his own ladies, where he married the youngest with the greatest festivities. As they came out of church to go to their house a new city sprang up along the roadside. The hilarity was great. I myself was among the guests, and after I had made merry to my heart's content I set out upon the way home to Varazdin.

The Two Melons

AN HONEST and poor old woman was washing clothes at a pool, when a bird that a hunter had disabled by a shot in the wing, fell down into the water before her. She gently took up the bird, carried it home with her, dressed its wound, and fed it until it was well, when it soared away. Some days later it returned, put before her an oval seed, and departed again. The woman planted the seed in her yard and when it came up she recognized the leaf as that of a melon. She made a trellis for it, and gradually a fruit formed on it, and grew to great size.

Toward the end of the year, the old dame was unable to pay her debts, and her poverty so weighed upon her that she became ill. Sitting one day at her door, feverish and tired, she saw that the melon was ripe, and looked luscious; so she determined to try its unknown quality. Taking a knife, she severed the melon from its stalk, and was surprised to hear it chink in her hands. On cutting it in two, she found it full of silver and gold pieces, with which she paid her debts and bought supplies for many days.

Among her neighbours was a busybody who craftily found out how the old woman had so suddenly become rich. Thinking there was no good reason why she should not herself be equally fortunate, she washed clothes at the pool, keeping a sharp lookout for birds until she managed to hit and maim one of a flock that was flitting over the water. She then took the disabled bird home, and treated it with care till its wing healed and it flew away. Shortly afterward it came back with a seed in its beak, laid it before her, and again took flight. The woman quickly planted the seed, saw it come up and spread its leaves, made a trellis for it, and had the gratification of seeing a melon form on its stalk. In prospect of her future wealth, she ate rich food, bought fine garments, and got so deeply into debt that, before the end of the year, she was harried by duns. But the melon grew apace, and she was delighted to find that, as it ripened, it became of vast size, and that when she shook it there was a great rattling inside. At the end of the year she cut it down, and divided it, expecting it to be a coffer of coins; but there crawled out of it two old, lame, hungry beggars, who told her they would remain and eat at her table as long as they lived.

The Iron Casket

IN BAGDAD, in the little lane by the Golden Bridge, lived, ages ago, a merchant named Kalif. He was a quiet, retiring man, who sat early and late in his little shop, and went but once a year to Mosul or Shiraz, where he bought embroidered robes in exchange for attar of roses.

On one of these journeys, chancing to have fallen a little in the rear of his caravan, he heard roarings and trampling of horse's hoofs in the thicket close by the roadside. Drawing his sword, which he wore on account of thieves, he entered the thicket. On a little green, surrounded by trees, he saw a horseman in a light blue mantle and a turban fastened by a flashing diamond. The horse, an Arab of purest blood, seemed to have lost its senses. Rearing upright with a piercing neigh, it struggled vainly to dislodge an enormous panther, which had fixed its great claws in its flanks. The rider had lost all control over it; blood and foam poured from its mouth and nostrils. Kalif sprang boldly out, with a mighty stroke split the panther's skull, and, flinging away his sword, ran to the horse's head, thereby enabling the rider to dismount. Having calmed the trembling animal, the horseman begged his rescuer to follow him.

"I had lost my way in the chase," he said, "and should have fallen a victim to the panther, if Allah had not sent you to my aid. I will reward you well for your bravery. Come! let us seek my companions; there, behind that wood, my camp must be."

"I did what any other would have done in my place," answered Kalif simply, "and expect no reward. But if you so will it, I will accompany you to your tents."

The stranger took his horse by the rein, and walked in silence at the merchant's side till they arrived at an opening in the trees.

Here, surrounded by several smaller ones, stood one large tent of purple linen. A number of richly clad men threw themselves on their faces before the new-comer. Then Kalif knew whom he had saved: it was the Shah himself. He was about to fall at his feet, but the Shah seized his hand and led him into the tent. Inside, standing on five stools, were five caskets, the first of gold set with jewels, the second of gold alone, the third silver, the fourth copper, and the fifth of iron.

"Choose one of these caskets," said the Shah.

Kalif hesitated. At length he said:

"What I did is not worthy of any reward, but if you will it, O King of Kings, I will take one of these caskets to remind me of the day when my eyes were permitted to behold the Light of Asia."

He stooped and took the iron casket.

The Shah started. "Stranger," he said, "your modesty has met with its own reward. You have chosen the most valuable casket; for, look! the others are empty, but this one contains two jewels which possess the magic gift of bestowing undreamed-of power to their owner." He raised the lid and showed the wondering Kalif the two stones. "This one," he said, "is a lapis lazuli. Whosoever winds it in the folds of his turban, to him everything is known that has happened since the world began, and no secret can be hidden from him. But this stone," and he took a diamond the size of a dove's egg from the casket, "this stone brings all the riches he can think of to its owner. He has but to rub the stone and repeat his wish aloud." He replaced the stones in the casket, closed the lid, and handed it to the merchant, who thanked the Shah, hid the treasure in his robes, and hastened to rejoin his caravan.

Once again in his own house he often looked at the princely gift, and one day as he was rubbing the lid he noticed an inscription upon it, that had hitherto been unseen. It ran: —

"'Tis Allah's will that he who cherishes
The precious gift that never perishes,
Shall make the East to bend as low
As palms that in the whirlwind blow."

Kalif never spoke of his adventure in the Kalaat Mountains, neither could he ever make up his mind to test the virtue of the stones, being a frugal man on the one hand, and unwilling to surpass his neighbours in wisdom on the other. But at length the news of the Shah's rescue by the merchant reached even Bagdad, together with the account of the Royal reward, and people jostled one another to call on the merchant and see with their own eyes the wonderful casket. In consequence Kalif had more customers in one day than he generally had in ten years, and his daily receipts testified to the worth of the casket. For many years he enjoyed the reward of his bravery, and at his death Ali Haitam, the eldest son, proposed that they should draw lots for the magic stones. He had great ideas of his own cleverness, and hoped from the bottom of his heart to win the lapis lazuli. Ali Hassuf, the second son, whose sole failing was insatiable greed, was quite agreeable, though in secret he was revolving in his own mind how to obtain the diamond in case it fell into the hands of the youngest son. But just as they were about to draw, Abdul Kassim, the youngest son, said: "Dear brothers, we are three, and there are but two stones. It would be better, therefore, for one to renounce his claim in order that no dispute may arise in our hitherto peace-loving family. I am the youngest, and therefore can have least claim on the stones. Throw to decide which stone shall fall to each. I resign!"

The other two were delighted and, as it happened, each got the stone he desired.

"But in order that I may have a keepsake of my dear father," continued Abdul Kassim, "permit me to take home the casket. It will be of no use to you, since you have divided the contents."

Ali Hassuf hesitated at first, but finally agreed to Kassim's wish.

The three brothers left the empty house, and went each to seek his fortune in his own way.

Ali Haitam bought a piece of muslin, folded it into a turban, sewed the lapis lazuli inside, and fixed it firmly on his head. Then he went to the bazaar and waited for an influx of wisdom. And see! The power of the stone set to work and his mind was filled with knowledge! He knew the origin of all things, and his eyes could see through walls five feet thick! He passed the Caliph's palace, and he could see that in the recesses of the cellars were hidden 9,000 sacks of gold, and that Fatma, the daughter of the Caliph, was the most lovely maiden in the East; and an idea occurred to him that dazzled him. "How would it be," he thought, "if I placed my wisdom at the Caliph's disposal, became his first adviser, and finally married the lovely Fatma?" But together with this dream came the longing to display to an admiring crowd some proofs of his wisdom.

He hurried back to the bazaar, mounted the highest steps at the gates, and cried: "You people of Bagdad, who believe that the sun moves round the earth, you are ignorant fools and sons of fools! Hear now what I preach to you. The sun stands still, but the earth moves!"

He intended to continue, but the cries of the bystanders interrupted him.

"Ali Haitam has gone mad," they cried; "listen to the nonsense he is talking. Come, let us hold him head first under the lion's mouth at the spring; that will restore him to reason!"

And one, a fruit dealer, took an orange, and crying, "Ali Haitam is right, the sun moves just as little as this orange!" flung the orange at the philosopher on the steps. The juicy fruit knocked the turban from Ali's head. He stooped to regain it, but in vain. The fruit dealer's throw was the signal for a general onslaught, so that he was obliged to take to his heels and fly for home. Dusty and panting he reached his hut, deeply grieved at the loss of his precious stone, and furious at the stupidity of the people, who showed so little understanding of the first principles of science.

The second brother started more cautiously. Since he had but seldom been farther than the end of the narrow street by the Golden Bridge, he was not in a position to think of anything very precious to wish for; he therefore first visited the bazaar and asked the price of everything he saw. At last he found something that, on account of its high price, made a great impression on him. It was a Turkish sword that a cunning jeweller had studded thickly with diamonds on handle and sheath. The dealer asked fifteen hundred golden coins for it, and the bystanders stared with open eyes at the man who dared to bargain for such costly possessions. Just as Ali Hassuf was weighing the precious sword in his hand, a palanquin was borne through the crowd. He turned, and through the drawn curtains caught sight of a maiden of wondrous beauty. When he heard that she was the Caliph's daughter, the desire awoke in his soul to marry this lovely creature, and it seemed to him not unlikely that the Caliph would give his daughter to a man of such note as he would become as the possessor of the magic diamond. He decided to buy the sword, and, armed with the same, to visit the Caliph the very next day.

"I shall come again the very first thing to-morrow morning," he said to the dealer. "I have not quite enough money with me now, but I shall procure it this evening. I had quite expected," he added boastingly, "that the sword would be expensive."

He turned and went home, where he saddled the thin ass and hung across its back two large panniers. When it grew dark he softly drove the beast through the yard and led it out into the desert. For about an hour he walked, and in imagination saw himself in possession of all the glories the talisman would bring him. He had not noticed that he was followed by three dark forms, who had never lost sight of him since his visit to the bazaar. He halted by a group of stunted palms, spread out a large cloth, and with trembling fingers began to rub the diamond, crying at the same time, "Spirit of the Stone! send me at once twenty shekels of golden coins!" He waited a moment, and listened in the darkness, thinking he heard whispering voices. But as all was silent he repeated his wish for the second and third time. He heard a noise as of the falling of soft, heavy weights, and, on stooping, found twenty well-filled sacks. He opened one, and felt inside. And, truly! it was really gold in bright new coins! With feverish haste he slung the sacks on the ass's back, and turned its head homeward. Suddenly he heard once more the same mysterious whisperings, this time in his immediate neighbourhood. He stood still and listened with bated breath. He felt himself seized by heavy hands and thrown to the ground, and saw another form seize the ass. Two men with blackened faces tore off his turban and robe and left him lying half-naked by the roadside, after having warned him to keep quiet as to this attack unless he wished to lose his life. Trembling with fright and rage, he saw the robbers disappear with his ass in the direction of the mountain. What pained him most was the loss of his diamond, which he had concealed in his robe. He reached home, where he lay hidden for weeks, too ashamed to show himself in the streets or at the bazaar. But once as he sat on the Golden Bridge fishing, to try and provide himself with a frugal meal, the weapon-dealer passed him by, and said: "Well, Ali Hassuf, when are you coming for your sword?"

But sword and Princess were forever lost to Ali Hassuf.

In the meantime, as the two elder brothers were mourning their losses, Abdul Kassim, the youngest, sat at home in his little house by the gardens, thinking with regret of his father, and wondering what he should do to earn himself his daily bread. Before him, on a little stool, stood the iron casket. There came a knock at the door, and Micha ben Jahzeel, the Jew, who had lent him money a month or two ago, walked in. Micha looked grave and said, "Abdul Kassim, times are bad, and ready money gets scarcer and scarcer. You know I lent you ten golden coins, and I have come to ask" — his eyes fell on the casket and he started, but collecting himself, went on: "I have come to tell you that I am not in an immediate hurry for the return of the loan. If you like you can keep it, or, as it is hardly worth mentioning, keep it for some months, or even years if you like. I only wanted to tell you you need n't trouble about it, there is no hurry at all." He bowed low to his debtor and withdrew.

Abdul Kassim marvelled at the change in the Jew's manner, but as he thought of the looks he had cast at the casket he could n't help smiling.

On the same evening came his neighbour, the clothes dealer, who had not visited him for years, "Dear friend," he said, and placed a bundle on the floor before Kassim, "I have come to entreat your pardon that my horse should have splashed your robe with mud the other day; he is a young thing, and is not yet properly broken. I have brought you a new robe to replace it, which I hope will please you." Then he withdrew. The young man could not recollect having been splashed by his neighbour's horse, still less could he account for the generosity of one who was celebrated for his meanness, in presenting him with such an elaborately embroidered robe.

Next morning, just as he had put on his new robe, a distant relation arrived, bringing a magnificently caparisoned horse.

"Dear cousin," he said — formerly he had not even noticed him — "your appearance grieves me. I feared you were giving way too much to grief at the loss of your father, and it would give me great pleasure to cheer you a little. I have ventured to bring you this horse, which is overcrowding my stable; do me the favour to accept this little gift!"

Abdul Kassim would have refused, but the cousin had hurried away. There he stood, holding the beautiful animal by the bridle. He could not resist the temptation to mount him. He swung himself into the saddle and rode into the town. Every one bowed to him, and many stood still, saying: "There, I told you so! Abdul Kassim was always the favorite son, and he has inherited the casket!"

Next morning, as the barber sharpened his razor and began to shave the Caliph, the latter asked him: "Well, Harmos, what are my subjects talking about just now?"

The barber bowed to the ground and said: "What should they speak of, O King of the Faithful, if not of your goodness and wisdom?"

"Of your idiocy, very likely," shouted the Caliph, bored by the eternal flatteries of the barber. "Tell me, what are the people talking about?"

"They talk," began Harmos hesitatingly; "they talk of the luck of your servant, Abdul Kassim, whom they call the wisest and richest of your subjects."

"Abdul Kassim? I don't even know his name," said the Caliph.

"He is the son and heir of Kalif," continued the barber, more courageously; "the same Kalif whom the Shah once rewarded with a magic casket."

He related at length all about the magic stones. The Caliph listened attentively, dismissed the barber, and sent a message to the Grand Vizier to come at once. The Vizier came and confirmed the barber's tale. "Abdul Kassim," he said, "knows everything that goes on in the world, and whenever he has a wish, all he has to do to fulfil it is to rub the diamond and say what he wants."

The Caliph grew serious. "Do you think, Vizier, that this man could usurp my throne? How would it be if I gave him a palace and raised him to be the husband of my daughter?"

The Grand Vizier agreed to the proposal of his ruler, and undertook himself to convey to the astounded Abdul Kassim the tidings that the Commander of the Faithful had given him a palace and awaited his visit.

The same evening the new favourite of the Caliph packed all his few belongings on the horse's back, took the iron casket under his arm and, amid the cheers of the crowd, entered the palace.

A troop of negroes received him and threw themselves at his feet. An especially gorgeously arrayed slave led him into a room, where a banquet awaited him. Abdul Kassim had never fared so well in his life. But he did not forget to praise Allah for his goodness. Next morning he put on his gorgeous robe, bound on the magnificent sword he found in the great hall, and rode, accompanied by the negroes, to visit the Caliph.

The Commander of the Faithful sat on the throne and awaited his subject, who, when he appeared, was about to throw himself in the dust at the ruler's feet, but the Caliph descended the three steps of the throne, and took the young man's hand.

"Are you Abdul Kassim," he said, "son of Kalif, the merchant who lived by the Golden Bridge?"

"I am he, Caliph," answered Abdul; "permit me to express my thanks for the palace with which you have endowed your most humble servant."

"I have heard much good of you," said the Caliph, when he had ordered his suite to retire; "and pray you to show me the magic jewels that help you to such power and wisdom."

"Of which jewels are you speaking?" asked Abdul Kassim, amazed.

"Well," smiled the Caliph, "which jewels should I mean but those you have inherited from your father?"

The young man stared. So the Caliph, too, took him for the possessor of the magic stones? Without reserve he confessed that, to avoid disputes he had voluntarily retired and left the stones to his brothers.

"But," said the Caliph, "Micha ben Jahzeel, the Jew, saw the casket in your house!"

"The casket he may have seen," answered Abdul Kassim; "I begged it of my brothers in memory of my father."

The Caliph seemed still in doubt. He sent a slave to Abdul Kassim's palace to bring the casket. The messenger brought it, gave it to the Caliph, and retired. The Caliph opened the lid and looked inside. It was in truth empty! His gaze fell on the inscription: —

"'Tis Allah's will that he who cherishes
The precious gift that never perishes,
Shall make the East to bend as low
As palms that in the whirlwind blow."

He read the verse and looked at the youth. "Abdul Kassim," he said, "you have jewels in your heart more precious than all the treasures of the earth. For love of your brothers you gave up the stones, and for love of your father you have preserved this seemingly worthless casket. But Allah has blessed you for your virtues and has, by means of this humble iron casket, raised you to power and wealth. I dare not refuse to assist you. I will give you the most priceless gift at my disposal — the hand of my only daughter."

He called the chief overseer of the harem and bade him lead Fatma to the throne-room. The maiden had passed the night in weeping, for she had heard that she was to be given in marriage to a strange man. She shuddered at the thought, for as only child of the Caliph she had been thoroughly spoiled, and hated the idea of leaving her father's roof.

Abdul Kassim, who until now had been struck utterly dumb with astonishment, could not refrain from a cry of admiration at the sight of the lovely Fatma. She seemed to him a hundred times more beautiful than any description he had heard of her in Bagdad.

In the midst of her grief Fatma retained her woman's curiosity, and on hearing the youth's voice, cast one glance at him over her father's shoulder. The first impression seemed not unfavourable. She eyed his slender form as he stood leaning on his sword, and gradually ceased her sobbing. She even raised herself and took hold of the Caliph's arm. "Father," she said, "do with me what you will; not without cause do the people call you 'The Wise One'."

So Fatma was married to Abdul. But neither she nor any other ever knew that the iron casket connected with her young lord's rise and power was empty. The Caliph advised his son-in-law to maintain the deepest silence as to the absence of the magic jewels.

In the fifth year of their wedded life the Caliph, feeling the weight of advancing years, abdicated in Abdul Kassim's favour, so the verse on the casket was fulfilled, and Abdul Kassim reigned many, many years over Bagdad, the best and wisest ruler who had ever ascended the throne. Allah's name be praised!

The Knights of the Fish

ONCE upon a time there was a poor cobbler, who, being unable to live by mending shoes, determined to buy a net and turn fisherman. He went a-fishing for several days, but could draw up nothing in his net but old boots and shoes, though few enough of them could he get hold of when he was a cobbler. At last he thought:

"This is the very last day I will go fishing. If I catch nothing I will go and hang myself."

He cast his net, and this time he found a fine fish in it. When he had taken the fish in his hand, it opened its mouth and said to him:

"Take me home to your house; cut me in six pieces and stew me with salt and pepper, cinnamon and cloves, laurel leaves and mint. Give two of the pieces to your wife, two to your mare, and the other two to the plant in the garden."

The cobbler did exactly what the fish had told him to do, such was the faith he had in its words. And he was duly rewarded, for several months afterward his wife presented him with two fine boys, and his mare with two colts, whilst the plant in his garden grew two lances which, instead of flowers, bore two shields, on which were to be seen a silver fish on an azure ground.

Everything went on so prosperously that in course of time, one fine day, might be seen two gallant youths issuing from the cobbler's house, mounted upon two superb chargers, and bearing slender lances and brilliant shields.

These two brothers were so much alike that they were known as The Double Knight; and each of them wishing, as was just, to preserve his own individuality, they determined to separate and each seek his own fortune. After embracing affectionately, the one took his way toward the West, and the other toward the East.

After travelling for some days the first arrived at Madrid, and found the royal city pouring bitter tears into the pure, sweet waters of her cherished river, the Manzanares. Everybody was weeping when our gallant youth arrived at the Spanish capital; he inquired the cause of this universal lamentation, and was informed that every year a fiery dragon came and carried off a beautiful maiden, and that this luckless year the lot had fallen upon their princess, the king's good and peerless daughter.

The knight at once inquired where the princess was to be found, and was informed, at about a quarter of a league's distance, where she was expecting the fiery one to appear and carry her off to his den. Then the knight started off at once to the place indicated, and found the princess bathed in tears, and trembling from head to foot.

"Fly away!" cried the princess, when she saw the Knight of the Fish approach; "fly away, rash one! the monster is coming here, and if he sees you, heaven help you!"

"I shall not go away," responded the gallant youth, "because I have come to save you."

"To save me! Is that possible?"

"I am going to see," responded the valiant champion. "Are there any German merchants in the city?"

"Yes," answered the princess in astonishment; "but why do you ask?"

"You will see," said the knight, and galloped off to the city of mourning.

He speedily returned with an immense mirror which he had purchased from a German dealer. This he rested against the trunk of a tree, and covered it with the princess's veil, placing her in front of it, and instructing her that when the dragon was near to her she was to pull off the veil and slip behind the glass. So saying, the knight retired behind an adjacent wall.

In a little while the fiery dragon appeared, and gradually drew near to the fair one, eying her with all the insolence and effrontery possible. When he was quite close, the princess, as she had been instructed by her champion, withdrew the veil, and slipping behind the mirror, disappeared from before the eyes of the fiery dragon, which remained stupefied at finding his amorous glances directed at a dragon similar to himself. He made a movement; his resemblance did the same. His eyes sparkled red and brilliant as two rubies; whilst those of his opponent gleamed like two carbuncles. This increased his fury; he erected his scales as a porcupine would its quills, and those of his rival likewise stood up. He opened his tremendous mouth, which would have been without parallel but for that of his opponent, who, far from being intimidated, opened an identical one. The dragon dashed furiously against his intrepid adversary, giving such an awful blow with his head against the mirror that he was completely stunned; and as he had broken the glass, and in every piece saw a piece of his own body, he fancied that with one blow he had dashed his rival to atoms.

The knight availed himself of this moment of confusion and stupefaction, and dashing forth impetuously from his retreat, with his good lance deprived the dragon of its life, and would have been ready to deprive it of a hundred lives had it possessed so many.

The delight and jubilation of the Madrid people may be imagined when they beheld the Knight of the Fish bearing on his saddle the beautiful princess, quite uninjured and as lively as a cricket, and the dragon, fastened by its neck to his sturdy charger, hanging dead and bloodless behind. It may, also, be readily guessed that after such an achievement they were unable to reward the gallant knight with anything but the princess's fair hand; and that they had wedding festivities, and banquets, and bull fights, and tilting matches, and all sorts of good things.

Some days after the marriage the Knight of the Fish said to his wife that he would like to look over the palace, which was so extensive that it covered a league of ground. They inspected the place together, and the task occupied them four days. On the fourth day they ascended the roof, and the knight was struck with amazement at the prospect. Never had he seen anything like it, nor ever could he have seen its equal, even if he had visited all Spain and the Empire of Morocco as well.

"What castle is that?" inquired the Knight of the Fish, "which I see standing in the distance, so solitary and sombre."

"That," responded the princess, "is the castle of Albastretch; it is enchanted, and no one is able to undo the enchantment; and no one of all those who have gone to it has ever been known to return."

The knight listened intently to this, and as he was valiant and adventurous, on the following morning he mounted his horse, seized his lance, and set out for the castle.

The castle was enough to set one's hair on end with fright to look at it; it was darker than a thunder-cloud, and as silent as death. But the Knight of the Fish knew nothing of fear, save by hearsay, and never turned his back on foe until he had conquered; so he took his cornet and blew it lustily. The sound startled all the slumbering echoes of the castle, so that they repeated it by heart, now nearer and now farther, sometimes softer and then louder; but no one stirred in the castle.

"Ah! what a castle!" shouted the knight. "Is there no one to see to a knight who craves shelter? Is there no governor, nor squire nor even a groom, to take my horse away?"

"Away! away! away!" clamoured the echoes.

"Why should I go away?" said the Knight of the Fish. "I shall not go back, no matter how much you sigh!"

"Ay! ay! ay! (*Alas! alas! alas!*)" groaned the echoes.

The knight grasped his spear and struck a loud blow on the door.

Then the portcullis was raised, and in the opening appeared the tip of an enormous nose, located between the sunken eyes and fallen-in mouth of an old woman uglier than sin.

"What do you want, impudent disturber?" she inquired, with a cracked voice.

"To enter," replied the knight. "Are you not able to afford me the enjoyment of some rest at this hour of the night? Yes or no?"

"No! no! no!" said the echoes.

Here the knight lifted his vizier, because he was warm; and the old woman, seeing how handsome he was, said to him:

"Come in, handsome youth; you shall be cared for and well looked after."

"After! after!" warned the echoes; but the knight was fearless and entered, the old woman promising that he should fare well.

"Farewell, farewell!" sighed the echoes.

"Go on, old lady," said the knight.

"I am called Lady Berberisca," interposed the old woman, very crossly; "and I am the mistress of Albastretch."

"Wretch! wretch!" groaned the echoes.

"Won't you be silent, cursed chatterers?" exclaimed Lady Berberisca. "I am your humble servant," she continued, making a deep curtsey to the knight, "and if you like I will be your wife, and you shall live with me here as grand as a Pacha."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the echoes.

"Would you have me marry you? You must be a hundred. You are foolish, and mad as well."

"Well, well," said the echoes.

"What I want," said the knight, "is the registry of the castle, to examine and amend."

"Amen! amen!" sighed the echoes.

Lady Berberisca's pride was deeply wounded; she gave a hasty glance at the Knight of the Fish, and intimating to him that he should follow her, she showed him over the castle, where he beheld many strange things, but she did not afford him any opportunity of referring to them. The wicked old woman took him through an obscure corridor, where there was a trap-door, into which he fell and disappeared into an abyss, where his voice was added to the echoes, which were the voices of many other gallant and accomplished knights, whom the shameless old Berberisca had punished in the same manner for having despised her venerable charms.

Let us now turn to the other Knight of the Fish, who, after long travels, arrived at Madrid. As he entered the city gates the sentinels presented arms, the drums beat the royal march; and several of the palace servitors surrounded him, saying that the princess was in constant tears through his prolonged absence, fearing that some misfortune had happened to him in the enchanted castle of Albastretch.

"It is necessary that I should pass for my brother," thought the knight, "to whom, it would appear, some good fortune has occurred. I must be quiet, and we shall see what will come to pass."

They carried him almost in triumph to the palace, where he found it easy to accept all the caresses and congratulations bestowed upon him by the king and the princess. They were eager to learn about his adventures, and what he had seen at the castle; but to the princess's inquiries he answered:

"I am not permitted to say a word about that until after I have been there once more."

"Are you thinking of revisiting that accursed castle? You are the only one who has yet returned from it."

"It is unavoidable; I am obliged to go there."

When they retired to rest, the knight placed his sword in the bed.

"Why do you do that?" inquired the princess.

"Because I have sworn not to sleep in a bed until after I have revisited Albastretch."

And on the following day he mounted his steed and took his way to the enchanted castle, much fearing that some misfortune had happened to his brother there. He arrived at the castle, and quickly saw the old woman's fiery nose appear at the portcullis.

No sooner did she see the knight than she became livid with fright, for she thought he was the dead knight come to life again. She began to invoke the object of her devotions, Beelzebub, most devoutly, and promised him all kinds of gifts if he would take from her view that vision of flesh and blood, drawn up from the abode of the dead.

"Ancient lady!" cried the recent arrival, "I have come to ask where a knight is who has been here?"

"Here! here! here!" responded the echoes.

"And what have you done with this knight, so accomplished in all things, and so skilled?"

"Killed! killed!" groaned the echoes.

On hearing this, and seeing the old hag running off, the Knight of the Fish, beside himself with rage, ran after her, and pierced her through with his sword, which remained fast in her body, so that she jumped about at the point of it like a parched pea in a frying-pan.

"Where is my brother, ugly old traitress?" demanded the knight.

"I can tell you," responded the witch, "but as I am at death's door, I will not let you know until you have resuscitated me."

"But how can I do this, perfidious witch?"

"Go to the garden," responded the old woman, "cut some evergreens, everlastings, and dragon's blood; with these plants make a decoction in a caldron, and then sprinkle some of it over me."

After saying this the old woman died, without uttering a prayer. The knight did all that the witch instructed him to do, and effectually resuscitated her, but uglier than ever, for her nose remained deadly white, and looked like an elephant's tusk. Then she was forced to tell the knight where his brother was; and down in the abyss he not only found him, but many other victims of the wicked Berberisca. He sprinkled them all with the decoction in the caldron, and they were all brought to life again, and to each person came an echo which had been his voice; and the first words they all uttered were:

"Accursed witch, merciless Berberisca!"

Then all those gallant knights, and many beautiful ladies whom the fiery old dragon — who was the witch's son — had carried there, gave thanks to the Knight of the Fish; and one of the most beautiful of the ladies gave him her hand; on seeing which, the wicked Berberisca died again with envy and spite.

Dapplegrim

ONCE on a time there was a rich couple who had twelve sons; but the youngest, when he was grown up, said he would n't stay any longer at home, but be off into the world to try his luck. His father and mother said he did very well at home, and had better stay where he was. But no, he could n't rest; away he must and would go.

So at last they gave him leave. And when he had walked a good bit, he came to a king's palace, where he asked for a place, and got it.

Now, the daughter of the king of that land had been carried off into the hill by a Troll, and the king had no other children; so he and all his land were in great grief and sorrow, and the king gave his word that anyone who could set her free should have the Princess and half the kingdom. But there was no one who could do it, though many tried.

When the lad had been there a year or so, he longed to go home again, and see his father and mother, and back he went; but when he got home his father and mother were dead, and his brothers had shared all that the old people owned between them, so there was nothing left for the lad.

"Shan't I have anything at all, then, out of father's and mother's goods?" asked the lad.

"Who could tell you were still alive, when you 've been wandering about so long?" said his brothers. "But all the same there are twelve mares up on the hill which we have n't yet shared amongst us; if you choose to take them for your share, you 're welcome."

Yes, the lad was quite content; so he thanked his brothers, and went at once up on the hill, where the twelve mares were out at grass. And when he got up there he found them; and one of them had along with her a big dapple-gray foal, which was so sleek that the sun shone from its coat.

"A fine fellow you are, my little foal," said the lad.

"Yes," said the foal, "but you wait until another year has passed, and then see how big and sleek I 'll be."

So the lad went home again, and when he came back the next year to look after his foal and mares, the foal was so sleek and fat that the sun shone from its coat, and it had grown so big the lad had hard work to mount it.

"Well, it 's quite plain I lost nothing by leaving you to graze for a twelvemonth," said the lad to the yearling, "but now you 're big enough to come along with me."

"No," said the colt, "I must bide here a year longer and then see how big and sleek I 'll be by summer."

Yes, the lad did that; and next year when he went up on the hill to look after his colt and mares, each mare had her foal, but the dapple colt was so tall that the lad could n't reach up to his crest when he wanted to feel how fat he was; and so sleek he was, too, that his coat glistened in the sunshine.

"Big and beautiful you were last year, my colt," said the lad, "but this year you 're far grander. There 's no such horse in the king's stable. But now you must come along with me."

"No," said Dapple again, "I must stay here one year more, to eat this beautiful grass, then just come and look at me when the summer comes."

So again the lad went away home.

But when he went up next year to look after Dapple and the mares, he was quite astonished. So tall, and stout, and sturdy, he never thought a horse could be; for Dapple had to lie down before the lad could bestride him, and it was hard work to climb up even then, although he lay flat; and his coat was so smooth and sleek that the sunbeams shone from it as from a looking-glass.

This time Dapple was willing enough to follow the lad, so he jumped up on his back, and when he came riding home to his brothers, they all clapped their hands and shouted, for such a horse they had never heard of or seen before.

"If you will only get me the best shoes you can for my horse, and the grandest saddle and bridle that are to be found," said the lad, "you may have my twelve mares that graze up on the hill yonder, and their twelve foals into the bargain." For you must know that this year every mare had her foal.

Yes, his brothers were ready to do that, and so the lad got such strong shoes under his horse that the stones flew high aloft as he rode away across the hills; and he had a golden saddle and a golden bridle, which gleamed and glistened a long way off.

"Now we 're off to the king's palace," said Dapplegrim — that was his name; "and mind you ask the king for a good stable and fodder for me."

Yes, the lad said he would mind; he 'd be sure not to forget; and when he rode off from his brothers' house, you may be sure it was n't long, with such a horse under him, before he got to the king's palace.

When he came there the king was standing on the steps, and stared and stared at the man who came riding along.

"Nay, nay," said he, "such a man and such a horse I never saw in all my life."

But when the lad asked if he could resume his place in the king's household, the king was so glad he was ready to jump and dance as he stood on the steps.

There was no reason, the king said, why the lad should not come back.

"Ay," said the lad, "but I must have good stable-room for my horse, and fodder that one can trust."

Yes, he should have meadow-hay and oats, as much as his horse could cram, and all the other knights had to lead their steeds out of the stable that Dapplegrim might stand alone, and have it all to himself.

But it was n't long before all the others in the king's household began to be jealous of the lad, and there was no end to the bad things they would have done to him, if they had only dared. At last they thought of telling the king that he had been boasting he was man enough to set the king's daughter free — whom the Troll had long since carried away into the hill — if he only chose. The king called the lad before him, and said he had heard what the lad had said, so now he must go and do it. If he succeeded, the king's daughter and half the kingdom should be his, and that promise would be faithfully kept; if he did n't, he should be killed.

The lad kept on saying he never said any such thing; but it was no good, the king would n't even listen to him; and so the end of it was he was forced to say he 'd go and try.

So he went into the stable, down in the mouth and heavy-hearted, and then Dapplegrim asked him at once why he was in such doleful dumps.

Then the lad told him all, and how he could n't tell which way to turn, and he said:

"As for setting the Princess free, that 's downright nonsense."

"Oh, but it might be done, perhaps," said Dapplegrim. "But you must first have me well shod. You must go and ask for ten pounds of iron and twelve pounds of steel for the shoes; and one smith to hammer and another to hold."

Yes, the lad did that, and got for answer, "Yes." He got both the iron and the steel, and the smith, and so Dapplegrim was shod both strong and well, and off went the lad from the courtyard in a cloud of dust.

But when he came to the hill into which the Princess had been carried, the pinch was how to get up the steep wall of rock where the Troll's cave was in which the Princess had been hid. For you must know the hill stood straight up and down right on end, as upright as a house wall, and as smooth as a sheet of glass.

The first time the lad went at it he got a little way up; but then Dapple's forelegs slipped, and down they went again, with a sound like thunder on the hill.

The second time he rode at it he got some way further up; but then one foreleg slipped, and down they went with a crash like a landslip.

But the third time Dapple said:

"Now we must show our mettle," and went at it again till the stones flew heaven-high about them, and so they got up.

Then the lad rode right into the cave at full speed, and caught up the Princess, and threw her over his saddle-bow, and out and down again before the Troll had time even to get on his legs; and so the Princess was freed.

When the lad came back to the palace the king was both happy and glad to get his daughter back, that you may well believe; but somehow or other, though I don't know how, the others about the court had so brought it about that the king was angry with the lad after all.

"Thanks you shall have for freeing my Princess," said he to the lad, when he brought the Princess into the hall and made his bow.

"She ought to be mine as well as yours; for you 're a word-fast man, I hope," said the lad.

"Ay, ay!" said the king, "have her you shall, since I said it, but first of all you must make the sun shine into my palace hall."

Now you must know there was a high, steep ridge of rock close outside the windows, which threw such a shade over the hall that never a sunbeam shone into it.

"That was n't in our bargain," answered the lad; "but I suppose I must do what you command. I must e'en go and try my luck, for the Princess I must and will have."

So down he went to Dapple, and told him what the king wanted; and Dapplegrim thought it might easily be done, but first of all he must be newly shod; and for that, ten pounds of iron and twelve pounds of steel besides were needed; and two smiths, one to hammer and the other to hold, and then they 'd soon get the sun to shine into the palace hall.

So when the lad asked for all these things, he got them at once — the king could n't say nay for very shame; and so Dapplegrim got new shoes, and such shoes! Then the lad jumped upon his back, and off they went again; and for every leap that Dapplegrim gave, down sank the ridge fifteen feet into the earth, and so they went on till there was nothing left of the ridge for the king to see.

When the lad got back to the king's palace, he asked the king if the Princess was not his now; for now no one could say that the sun did n't shine into the hall. But then the others whispered to the king again, and he answered that the lad should have her, of course; he had never thought of anything else; but first of all he must get as grand a horse for the bride to ride on to church as the bridegroom had himself.

The lad said the king had n't spoken a word about this before, and that he thought he had now fairly earned the Princess; but the king held to his own; and more, if the lad could n't do that he should lose his life; that was what the king said. So the lad went down to the stable in doleful dumps, as you may well fancy, and there he told Dapplegrim all about it; how the king had laid that task upon him, to find the bride as good a horse as the bridegroom had himself, else he would lose his life.

"But that 's not so easy," he said, "for your match is n't to be found in the wide world."

"Oh, yes, I have a match," said Dapplegrim; "but he lives a long way from here, and rules over a great country. Still, we 'll try. And now you must go up to the king and ask for new shoes for me, ten pounds of iron and twelve pounds of steel; and two smiths, one to hammer and one to hold; and mind you see that the points and ends of those shoes are sharp; and twelve sacks of rye, and twelve sacks of barley, and twelve roasted oxen we must have with us; and mind, we must have the twelve ox-hides, with twelve hundred spikes driven into each; and, let me see, a big tar-barrel — that 's all we want."

So the lad went up to the king and asked for all that Dapplegrim required, and the king again thought he could n't say nay, for shame's sake, and so the lad got all he wanted.

Well, he jumped up on Dapplegrim's back, and rode away from the palace, and when he had ridden far over hill and heath, Dapple asked:

"Do you hear anything?"

"Yes, I hear an awful hissing and rustling up in the air," said the lad; "I think I 'm getting afraid."

"That 's all the wild birds that fly through the wood. They are sent to stop us; but just cut a hole in the corn sacks, and then they 'll have so much to do with the corn, they 'll forget us, quite."

Yes, the lad did that; he cut holes in the corn sacks, so that the rye and the barley ran out on all sides. Then all the wild birds came flying round them so thick that the sunbeams grew dark, but as soon as they saw the corn they could n't keep to their purpose, but flew down and began to pick and scratch at the rye and barley; and after that they began to fight amongst themselves. As for Dapplegrim and the lad, they forgot all about them, and did them no harm.

So the lad rode on and on — far, far over mountain and dale, over sand-hills and moor. Then Dapplegrim began to prick up his ears again, and at last he asked the lad if he heard anything.

"Yes, now I hear such an ugly rushing and howling in the wood all round, it makes me quite afraid."

"Ah!" said Dapplegrim, "that 's all the wild beasts that range through the wood, and they 're sent out to stop us. But just cast out the twelve carcasses of the oxen; that will give them enough to do, and so they 'll forget us outright."

Yes, the lad cast out the carcasses, and then all the wild beasts in the wood — bears and wolves and lions — came after them. But when they saw the carcasses, they began to fight for them amongst themselves, till blood flowed in streams; but Dapple and the lad they quite forgot.

So the lad rode far away, and they changed the landscape many, many times, for Dapplegrim did n't let the grass grow under him, as you may imagine. At last Dapple gave a great neigh.

"Do you hear anything?" he said.

"Yes, I hear something like a colt neighing loudly a long, long way off," answered the lad.

"That 's a full-grown colt, then," said Dapplegrim, "if we hear him neigh so loud such a long way off."

After that they travelled a good bit, changing the landscape once or twice, maybe. Then Dapplegrim gave another neigh.

"Now listen, and tell me if you hear anything," he said.

"Yes, now I hear a neigh like a full-grown horse," answered the lad.

"Ay, ay!" said Dapplegrim, "you 'll hear him once again soon, and then you 'll hear he 's got a voice of his own."

So they travelled on and on, and changed the landscape once or twice, perhaps, and then Dapplegrim neighed the third time; but before he could ask the lad if he heard anything, something gave such a neigh across the heathery hillside, the lad thought hill and rock would surely be rent asunder.

"Now he 's here!" said Dapplegrim; "make haste, now, and throw the ox-hides, with the spikes in them, over me, and throw down the tar-barrel on the plain; then climb up into that great spruce-fir yonder. When it comes, fire will flash out of both nostrils, and then the tar-barrel will catch fire. Now, mind what I say. If the flame rises, I win; if it falls, I lose; but if you see me winning, take and cast the bridle — you must take it off me — over its head, and then it will be tame enough."

So just as the lad had done throwing the ox-hides, with the spikes, over Dapplegrim, and had cast down the tar-barrel on the plain, and had got well up into the spruce-fir, up galloped a horse, with fire flashing out of its nostrils, and the flame caught the tar-barrel at once. Then Dapplegrim and the strange horse began to fight till the stones flew heaven-high. They fought and bit and kicked, both with fore feet and hind feet, and sometimes the lad could see them, and sometimes he could n't; but at last the flame began to rise; for wherever the strange horse kicked or bit, he met the spiked hides, and at last he had to yield.

When the lad saw that, he was n't long getting down from the tree and in throwing the bridle over its head, and then it was so tame you could hold it with a pack-thread.

And what do you think — that horse was dappled, too, and so like Dapplegrim, you could n't tell which was which. Then the lad bestrode the new Dapple he had won, and rode home to the palace, and old Dapplegrim ran loose by his side. So when he got home, there stood the king out in the yard.

"Can you tell me, now," said the lad, "which is the horse I have caught and broken, and which is the one I had before? If you can't, I think your daughter is fairly mine."

Then the king went and looked at both Dapples, high and low, before and behind, but there was n't a hair on one which was n't on the other as well.

"No," said the king, "that I can't; and since you 've got my daughter such a grand horse for her wedding, you shall have her with all my heart. But still we 'll have one trial more, just to see whether you 're fated to have her. First, she shall hide herself twice, and then you shall hide yourself twice. If you can find out her hiding-place, and she can't find out yours, why, then, you 're fated to have her, and so you shall have her."

"That 's not in the bargain, either," said the lad; "but we must try, since it must be so;" and so the Princess went off to hide herself first.

So she turned herself into a duck, and lay swimming on a pond that was close to the palace. But the lad only ran down to the stable, and asked Dapplegrim what she had done with herself.

"Oh, you only need take your gun," said Dapplegrim, "and go down to the brink of the pond, and aim at the duck which lies swimming about there, and she 'll soon show herself."

So the lad snatched his gun and ran off to the pond.

"I 'll just take a pop at this duck," he said, and began to aim at it.

"Nay, nay, dear friend, don't shoot. It 's I," said the Princess.

So he found her once.

The second time the Princess turned herself into a loaf of bread, and laid herself on the table amongst four other loaves; and so like was she to the others, no one could say which was which.

But the lad went again down to the stable to Dapplegrim, and said how the Princess had hidden herself again, and he could n't tell at all what had become of her.

"Oh, just take and sharpen a good bread-knife," said Dapplegrim, "and do as if you were going to cut in two the third loaf on the left hand of those four loaves which are lying on the dresser in the king's kitchen, and you 'll find her soon enough."

Yes, the lad was down in the kitchen in no time, and began to sharpen the biggest bread-knife he could lay his hands on; then he caught hold of the third loaf on the left hand, and put the knife to it, as though he were going to cut it in two.

"I 'll just have a slice off this loaf," he said.

"Nay, dear friend," said the Princess, "don't cut. It 's I."

So he found her twice.

Then he was to go and hide but he and Dapplegrim had settled it so well beforehand, it was n't easy to find him. First he turned himself into a fly, and hid himself in Dapplegrim's left nostril; and the Princess went about hunting for him everywhere, high and low. At last she wanted to go into Dapplegrim's stall, but he began to bite and kick, so that she dare n't go near him, and so she could n't find the lad.

"Well," she said, "since I cannot find you, you must show where you are yourself;" and in a trice the lad stood there on the stable floor.

The second time Dapplegrim told him just what to do; and then he turned into a clod of earth, and stuck himself between Dapple's hoof and shoe on the near forefoot. So the Princess hunted up and down, out and in, everywhere; at last she came into the stable, and wanted to go into Dapplegrim's loose box. This time he let her come up to him, and she pried high and low, but under his heels she could n't come, for he stood firm as a rock on his feet, and so she could n't find the lad.

"Well, you must just show yourself, for I 'm sure I can't find you," said the Princess, and as she spoke the lad stood by her side on the stable floor.

"Now you are mine indeed," said the lad; "for now you can see I 'm fated to have you." This he said both to the father and daughter.

"Yes; it is so fated," said the king; "so it must be."

Then everything was made ready for the wedding with great splendour and promptitude; and the lad got on Dapplegrim, and the Princess on Dapplegrim's match, and then you may guess they were not long on their way to church.

The Hermit

IN THE reign of King Moabdar there lived at Babylon a young man named Zadig. He was handsome, rich, and naturally good-hearted; and at the moment when this story opens, he was travelling on foot to see the world, and to learn philosophy and wisdom. But, hitherto, he had encountered so much misery, and endured so many terrible disasters, that he had become tempted to rebel against the will of Heaven, and to believe that the Providence which rules the world neglects the good and lets the evil prosper. In this unhappy spirit he was one day walking on the banks of the Euphrates, when he chanced to meet a venerable hermit, whose snowy beard descended to his girdle, and who carried in his hand a scroll which he was reading with attention. Zadig stopped, and made him a low bow. The hermit returned the salutation with an air so kindly, and so noble, that Zadig felt a curiosity to speak to him. He inquired what scroll was that which he was reading.

"It is the Book of Destiny," replied the hermit; "would you like to read it?"

He handed it to Zadig; but the latter, though he knew a dozen languages, could not understand a word of it. His curiosity increased.

"You appear to be in trouble," said the kindly hermit.

"Alas!" said Zadig, "I have cause to be so."

"If you will allow me," said the hermit, "I will accompany you. Perhaps I may be useful to you. I am sometimes able to console the sorrowful."

Zadig felt a deep respect for the appearance, the white beard, and the mysterious scroll of the old hermit, and perceived that his conversation was that of a superior mind. The old man spoke of destiny, of justice, of morality, of the chief good of life, of human frailty, of virtue, and of vice, with so much power and eloquence, that Zadig felt himself attracted by a kind of charm, and besought the hermit not to leave him until they should return to Babylon.

"I ask you the same favour," said the hermit. "Promise me that, whatever I may do, you will keep me company for several days."

Zadig gave the promise; and they set forth together.

That night the travellers arrived at a grand mansion. The hermit begged for food and lodging for himself and his companion. The porter, who might have been mistaken for a prince, ushered them in with a contemptuous air of welcome. The chief servant showed them the magnificent apartments; and they were then admitted to the bottom of the table, where the master of the mansion did not condescend to cast a glance at them. They were, however, served with delicacies in profusion, and, after dinner, washed their hands in a golden basin set with emeralds and rubies. They were then conducted for the night into a beautiful apartment; and the next morning, before they left the castle, a servant brought them each a piece of gold.

"The master of the house," said Zadig, as they went their way, "appears to be a generous man, although a trifle haughty. He practises a noble hospitality." As he spoke he perceived that a kind of large pouch which the hermit carried appeared singularly distended; within it was the golden basin, set with precious stones, which the old man had purloined. Zadig was amazed; but he said nothing.

At noon the hermit stopped before a little house, in which lived a wealthy miser, and once more asked for hospitality. An old valet in a shabby coat received them very rudely, showed them into the stable, and set before them a few rotten olives, some moldy bread, and beer which had turned sour. The hermit ate and drank with as much content as he had shown the night before; then, addressing the old valet, who had kept his eye upon them to make sure that they stole nothing, he gave him the two gold pieces which they had received that morning, and thanked him for his kind attention. "Be so good," he added; "as to let me see your master."

The astonished valet showed them in.

"Most mighty signor," said the hermit, "I can only render you my humble thanks for the noble manner in which you have received us. I beseech you to accept this golden basin as a token of my gratitude."

The miser almost fell backwards with amazement. The hermit, without waiting for him to recover, set off with speed with his companion.

"Holy Father," said Zadig, "what does all this mean? You seem to me to resemble other men in nothing. You steal a golden basin set with jewels from a signor who receives you with magnificence, and you give it to a curmudgeon who treats you with indignity."

"My son," replied the hermit, "this mighty lord, who only welcomes travellers through vanity, and to display his riches, will henceforth grow wiser, while the miser will be taught to practise hospitality. Be amazed at nothing, and follow me."

Zadig knew not whether he was dealing with the most foolish or the wisest of all men. But the hermit spoke with such ascendancy that Zadig,who, besides, was fettered by his promise, had no choice except to follow him.

That night they came to an agreeable house, of simple aspect, and showing signs neither of prodigality nor avarice. The owner was a philosopher, who had left the world, and who studied peacefully the rules of virtue and of wisdom, and who yet was happy and contented. He had built this calm retreat to please himself, and he received the strangers in it with a frankness which displayed no sign of ostentation. He conducted them himself to a comfortable chamber, where he made them rest awhile; then he returned to lead them to a dainty little supper. During their conversation they agreed that the affairs of this world are not always regulated by the opinions of the wisest men, but the hermit still maintained that the ways of Providence are wrapped in mystery, and that men do wrong to pass judgment on a universe of which they only see the smallest part. Zadig wondered how a person who committed such mad acts could reason so correctly.

At length, after a conversation as agreeable as instructive, the host conducted the two travellers to their apartment, and thanked Heaven for sending him two visitors so wise and virtuous. He offered them some money, but so frankly that they could not feel offended. The old man declined, and desired to say farewell, as he intended to depart for Babylon at break of day. They therefore parted on the warmest terms, and Zadig, above all, was filled with kindly feelings toward so amiable a man.

When the hermit and himself were in their chamber, they spent some time in praises of their host. At break of day the old man woke his comrade.

"We must be going," he remarked. "But while every one is still asleep, I wish to leave this worthy man a pledge of my esteem." With these words he took a torch and set the house on fire.

Zadig burst forth into cries of horror, and would have stopped the frightful act. But the hermit, by superior strength, drew him away. The house was in a blaze; and the old man, who was now a good way off with his companion, looked back calmly at the burning pile.

"Heaven be praised!" he cried, "our kind host's house is destroyed from top to bottom."

At these words Zadig knew not whether he should burst out laughing, call the reverend father an old rascal, knock him down, or run away. But he did neither. Still subdued by the superior manner of the hermit, he followed him against his will to their next lodging.

This was the dwelling of a good and charitable widow, who had a nephew of fourteen, her only hope and joy. She did her best to use the travellers well; and the next morning she bade her nephew guide them safely past a certain bridge, which, having recently been broken, had become dangerous to cross over. The youth, eager to oblige them, led the way.

"Come," said the hermit, when they were half across the bridge, "I must show my gratitude toward your aunt;" and as he spoke he seized the young man by the hair and threw him into the river. The youth fell, reappeared for an instant on the surface, and then was swallowed by the torrent.

"Oh, monster!" exclaimed Zadig, "ah, most detestable of men ——"

"You promised me more patience," interrupted the old man. "Listen! Beneath the ruins of that house which Providence saw fit to set on fire, the owner will discover an enormous treasure; while this young man, whose existence Providence cut short, would have killed his aunt within a year, and you yourself in two."

"Who told you so, barbarian?" cried Zadig; "and even if you read the issue in your Book of Destiny, who gave you power to drown a youth who never injured you?"

While he spoke, he saw that the old man had a beard no longer, and that his face had become fair and young; his hermit's frock had disappeared; four white wings covered his majestic form, and shone with dazzling lustre.

"Angel of heaven," cried Zadig, "you are then descended from the skies to teach an erring mortal to submit to the eternal laws."

"Men," replied the angel Jezrael, "judge all things without knowledge; and you, of all men, most deserved to be enlightened. The world imagines that the youth who has just perished fell by chance into the water, and that by a like chance the rich man's house was set on fire. But there is no such thing as chance; all is trial, or punishment, or foresight. Feeble mortal, cease to argue and rebel against what you ought to adore!"

As he spoke these words the angel took his flight to heaven, and Zadig fell upon his knees.

The Watch-tower Between Earth and Heaven[*]

ONCE upon a time there was a King who had three sons and one daughter. He kept the daughter in a cage and guarded her as the eyes in his head.

When the maiden was grown up she begged her father one evening to let her go out and take a walk before the castle with her brothers. The father consented, but hardly was she out of the door when suddenly a Dragon came swooping down from the sky, seized the maiden from among her brothers, and carried her away with him high into the clouds.

The brothers rushed headlong back to their father, told him of their misfortune, and begged permission to go and seek their stolen sister. The father consented, gave them each a horse and everything needful for a journey, and they set out.

After many wanderings they came across a watch-tower which stood neither on earth nor in heaven. When they reached the place it occurred to them that their sister might be within, and they at once began to take counsel among themselves as to how they should reach it.

After long consultation they decided to kill one of their horses, cut his skin into a long strap, fasten the end to an arrow, and shoot it up into some place in the watch-tower where it would hold securely. Then they could easily climb up. The two younger brothers asked the eldest to sacrifice his horse, but he would not; nor would the second brother. So the youngest brother slew his horse, cut the hide into a long strap, bound one end to his arrow, and with his bow shot it up into the tower.

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[*] From "The Russian Grandmother's Wonder Tales." Copyright, 1906, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

But now, when it came to climbing up by the strap, the eldest and second brothers declined, whereupon the youngest undertook the adventure. Arriving at the tower, he went from room to room, until at last he came to one where he saw his sister sitting, with the Dragon's head in her lap, the Dragon being fast asleep.

When the sister perceived her brother she was greatly terrified, and softly entreated him to flee before the Dragon should awake. This he would not do, but seized his cudgel, struck out boldly, and dealt the Dragon a heavy blow upon the head. The Dragon, without awaking, put his hand up to the spot, murmuring, "Something hit me right here."

As he said this the Prince fetched him a second blow upon the head, and again the Dragon murmured, "Something hit me here." But now, as the brother made ready to strike a third time, the sister made a sign showing the Dragon's vulnerable spot; and the brother, giving a powerful blow, killed him as dead as a mouse.

Then the Princess pushed him from her, flew into her brother's arms, and smothered him with kisses. After this she took him by the hand and began to lead him through all the rooms. First she led him into a room in which a black fox, with a harness of pure silver, was standing before a manger. Then she led him into another room, where a white horse, with a harness of pure gold, stood before another manger. Finally she led him into a third room, where a brown horse stood before a manger, his harness all studded with diamonds.

When they had gone through these rooms, the sister led her brother into a chamber where a maiden sat before a golden embroidery frame, working with golden threads. From this room she led him into another, where a second maiden was spinning gold thread, and at last into a room where a third maiden was stringing pearls, while at her feet a golden hen, with a brood of chickens, was picking up pearls from a golden basin.

When they had gone through all these rooms and seen all they wanted to see, they went back into the room where the dead

Dragon lay, dragged him out, and threw him head-foremost down to the earth. When the other brothers saw him they were almost convulsed with terror. But now the youngest brother let down to them first their sister and then the three maidens, one after another, each with her work. As he let them down he allotted one to each of his brothers, and when he let down the third, that is, the one with the hen and chickens, he reserved her to himself.

But his brothers, filled with envy because he was the hero who had discovered all these things and rescued their sister, cut the strap to make it impossible for him to return. Then they rode away, and coming upon a shepherd boy with his sheep, they dressed him like their brother and brought him home to their father, forbidding their sister and the maidens, with fearful threats, under any circumstances to reveal the secret.

After a time word came to the youngest brother in the tower that his brothers and the shepherd were about to marry those three maidens. On the day appointed for the eldest brother's wedding he mounted the white horse and flew down into the midst of the wedding-guests just as they were leaving the church, and struck his brother lightly upon the back with his club. The brother fell from his horse and the other flew back to his watch-tower.

When the second brother's wedding-day came he again flew down upon his steed, gave the second brother a blow upon the back, so that he fell from his horse, and again flew away. But when he at last heard that the shepherd was about to marry the third maiden he again mounted his steed, flew among the wedding-guests just as they were coming out of the church, and dealt the bridegroom such a blow upon the head with his club that the fellow lay dead upon the spot.

In a trice the Prince was surrounded by the wedding-guests, who were determined that he should not escape this time. He made no attempt to do so, however, but remained where he was, made himself known as the King's youngest son, revealed the trick his brothers had played upon him by means of the shepherd, and told how they had left him in the watch-tower where he had found his sister and killed the Dragon.

His sister and the maidens bore witness to the truth of his story, and when the King heard all this he banished the two elder brothers from his presence, married the youngest to the maiden of his choice, and decreed that he should be heir to the throne after his own decease.

The Lucky Coin

MANY years ago there lived in a hermitage a holy monk. From all the villages around, the people, mostly poor labourers, were in the habit of coming to him on Sundays and festivals to hear him say mass for them. These good people used to bring little offerings of food for the support of the hermit during the week.

One Sunday, after his congregation had departed, the monk perceived a man, laden with traps and nets for catching birds, crossing the field before the hermitage. The good monk went out to him.

"Where do you come from?" he inquired; "and what are you going to do, my son?"

"I live some miles from here, good father," he replied, "and I have borrowed a few nets and traps to try to catch some doves to sell, so as to get a little butter for our bread; for with that and a draught of water from the spring my wife and I are satisfied; or else to get some work to do, that I may earn enough for our support, for we have neither bread nor a single farthing to buy it."

The hermit took the man into his hermitage, and gave him the little offerings of food which had been brought that morning by the villagers, leaving Providence to provide for his own simple wants.

"Brother," he said, "take this for yourself and your wife; and if you want money I will give you some. But you must first tell me which you choose, to earn a single coin honestly, or a hundred, dishonestly."

The poor man hesitated, for great was the temptation.

"I will consult with my wife," he said at last, "and return to-morrow to inform you."

With the food in his hands he returned to his miserable home, where he and his wife made an excellent meal, for which they returned thanks to Heaven. They then consulted together about the money, and, though the temptation was great to take the hundred coins, yet, being God-fearing folks, they decided upon taking the one coin honestly acquired and let alone the hundred.

The man accordingly returned to the hermit, and told him what they had decided.

The good monk gave him two half *reals*.

"Take this money," he said; "and may Heaven prosper you."

Full of joy, the man departed. But on the road home, in a solitary spot, he encountered two lads fighting desperately; they were dealing each other terrible blows, and blood was streaming down their faces. The man rushed up to separate them, but all his efforts only served to make them fiercer.

"Why do you fight like this?" he cried.

"We are fighting for that stone," replied one of the lads; "I saw it first!"

"No, you did n't," replied the other; "it was I, and it belongs to me!" and once more they fell to blows more desperate than before.

The poor man, fearing that the quarrel might end fatally, cried out to them —

"Here, take each of you one of these coins, and let alone the stone; it is of no value, for it is no bigger than a walnut. And be off with you!"

The lads were glad to take the money, and ran away, thinking themselves lucky to make so good a bargain.

His wife was at the cottage door impatiently awaiting her husband. Great was her disappointment when all he brought her was a stone.

"Well, to be sure!" she cried, after he had recounted what had taken place, "I *am* disappointed." And, taking the little stone, she threw it into a corner of the room.

"Dear wife," replied the man, "do not take it so to heart.

The money was spent in a good work; in making peace between the children of our neighbours."

His wife at length became more reconciled to the loss, considering that after all he had done right to make peace between their neighbours' sons at any cost. Not many minutes after, the parents of the two lads came to thank the man for having separated the boys. They also thanked him for the money he had given to the boys, for they knew he sorely needed it himself. Each of the parents gave him a present for his friendly service; and from that day they always treated him most kindly, and often gave him little jobs to do, so that the poor couple never wanted bread.

Not long afterwards, it happened that the King's Ambassador passed that way, with a great retinue of officials, secretaries, and servitors; and it fell out that, night coming on, the Ambassador decided upon taking his quarters in the village.

The village inns were small, and could not afford accommodation for so large a retinue, and the various cottagers were asked to take in one or more of the servants. Among those who gave lodgings to the retinue were our good couple, who took in a lodger, for whom they were paid handsomely. The wife quickly prepared a clean, tidy bed, and did her best to make things comfortable.

The guest, being tired, was soon fast asleep. Toward morning he awoke, and was surprised to see the chamber bathed in a resplendent light. Knowing well that the people of the house could not afford a lamp or candles, he arose to find out whence proceeded this unusual brilliancy. Great was his astonishment to find that it proceeded from a small stone in the corner of the room, which, as the sun struck on it, sent out rays of vivid light. He took up the stone, and, believing it to be of great value, took it to the Ambassador.

When the nobleman examined the stone, he admired it greatly, and desired its owner to be sent for in order to learn all particulars about it.

"Please, your Excellency," said the poor man, "it is of no use to us, and if it pleases you, take it, for it cost me only a small coin"; and he proceeded to relate how it had come into his possession.

The Ambassador drew forth a heavy bag of money, and taking out a handful of gold pieces, gave them to the man.

"My good fellow," he said, "since you offer me the stone, I accept it gladly; but as I am leaving the kingdom, and my expenses are very heavy, I cannot give you all that it is worth. If it please Heaven, I will return this way, and I will pay you then."

The poor man did not like to accept so much gold for what he judged to be a worthless stone; but on the nobleman's entreaty he took the money, and ran back to his wife, full of joy at his good fortune. Both husband and wife then went at once to the hermit to recount to him all that had taken place, and to offer him a tenth of the money. This he refused to take, but bade them return to the village and distribute it in alms to the poor. They returned to the village accordingly and did as the monk had bidden them. They also gave part of the money to the parents of the lads who had fought so desperately for the possession of the stone. The rest the man spent in purchasing a piece of land.

This little plot of ground proved very fertile, and whatever the owner planted produced a hundredfold. His trees were borne down by the weight of the fruit, which always fetched a good price.

Years passed ere the Ambassador returned from the foreign country, where he had gained high honours and wealth. On passing the village again where he had obtained the stone, he inquired for the good man, and was told how he had prospered with the money he had given him, and that he was now a person of importance.

On arriving at the Court of his sovereign he recounted to the King all that had taken place. The King was greatly pleased with the history of the honestly earned coin, and had the stone valued by the first jewellers of the kingdom, who all pronounced it to be a singularly valuable gem. A large sum was given to the

Ambassador for it, and he was loaded with distinctions and honours. The nobleman, wishing to show his gratitude for the honours conferred on him, sent handsome presents to the good man and his wife.

And so it came to pass that they who had been honest were now prosperous as well.

The Jackal, the Barber and the Brahmin

A BARBER and a Jackal once struck up a great friendship, which might have continued to this day, had not the Jackal been so clever that the Barber never felt quite on equal terms with him, and suspected his friend of playing him many tricks. But this he was not able to prove.

One day the Jackal said to the Barber, "It would be a nice thing for us to have a garden of our own, in which we might grow as many cucumbers, pumpkins and melons as we like. Why should we not buy one?"

The Barber answered, "Very well; here is money. Do you go and buy us a garden." So the Jackal took the Barber's money, and with it bought a fine garden, in which were cucumbers, pumpkins, melons, figs, and many other good fruits and vegetables. And he used to go there every day and feast to his heart's content. When, however, the Barber said to him, "What is the garden like which you bought with the money I gave you?" he answered, "There are very fine plants in it, but there is no fruit upon them; when the fruit is ripe I will let you know." This reply satisfied the Barber, who inquired no further at that time.

A little while afterward, the Barber again asked the Jackal about the garden, saying, "I see you go down to that garden every day; is the fruit getting ripe?"

"Oh dear no, not yet," answered the Jackal; "why, the plants are only just coming into blossom."

But all this time there was a great deal of fruit in the garden, and the Jackal went there every day and ate as much as he could.

Again, a third time, when some weeks had passed, the Barber said to him, "Is there no ripe fruit in our garden yet?"

"No," said the Jackal; "the blossoms have only just fallen, but the fruit is forming. In time we shall have a fine show of melons and figs there."

Then the Barber began to think the Jackal was deceiving him, and determined to see and judge for himself. So next day, without saying anything about it, he followed him down to the garden.

Now it happened that very day the Jackal had invited all his friends to come and feast there. All the animals in the neighbouring jungle had accepted the invitation; there they came trooping by hundreds and dozens, and were very merry indeed — running here and there, and eating all the melons and cucumbers and figs and pumpkins in the place.

The Barber peeped over the hedge, and saw the assembled wild beasts, and his friend the Jackal entertaining them — talking to this one, laughing with that, and eating with all. The good man did not dare to attack the intruders, as they were many and powerful. But he went home at once, very angry, muttering to himself, "I 'll be the death of that young jackanapes; he shall play no more pranks in my garden." And, watching his opportunity, he returned there when the Jackal and all his friends had left, and tied a long knife to the largest of the cucumbers that still remained; then he went home and said nothing of what he had seen.

Early next morning the Jackal thought to himself, "I 'll just run down to the garden and see if there are no cucumbers or melons left." So he went there, and, picking out the largest of the cucumbers, began to eat it. Quick as thought, the long knife, that was concealed by the cucumber leaves, ran into him, cutting his muzzle, his neck and his side.

"Ah, that nasty Barber!" he cried; "this must be his doing!" And instead of going home, he ran as fast as he could, very far, far, away into the jungle, and stretching himself out on a great flat rock, prepared to die.

But he did not die. Only for three whole days the pain in his neck and side was so great that he could not move; moreover, he felt very weak from loss of blood.

At the end of the third day he tried to get up, but his own blood had sealed him to the stone! He endeavoured to move it by his struggles, but could not succeed. "Oh dear! oh dear!" he murmured; "to think that I should recover from my wound, only to die such a horrible death as this! Ah, me! here is the punishment of dishonesty!" And, having said this, he began to weep. It chanced, however, that the god of Rain heard his lamentations, and taking pity on the unfortunate animal, he sent a kindly shower, which, wetting the stone, effected his release.

No sooner was the Jackal set free than he began to think what he could do to earn a livelihood, since he did not dare return to the Barber's house. It was not long before a feasible plan struck him: all around was the mud made by the recent rain; he placed a quantity of it in a small chattee, covered the top over carefully with leaves (as people do jars of fresh butter), and took it into a neighbouring village to sell.

At the door of one of the first houses to which he came stood a woman, to whom the Jackal said, "Mahi, here is butter — beautiful fresh butter! won't you buy some fresh butter?"

She answered, "Are you sure it is quite fresh? Let me see it."

But he replied, "It is perfectly fresh; but if you open the chattee now, it will be all spoiled by the time you want it. If you like to buy it, you may take it; if not, I will sell it to some one else."

The woman did want some fresh butter, and the chattee the Jackal carried on his head was carefully fastened up, as if what it contained was of the best; and she knew if she opened it, it might spoil before her husband returned home; besides, she thought, if the Jackal had intended to deceive her, he would have been more pressing in asking her to buy it. So she said, "Very well, give me the chattee; here is money for you. You are sure it is the best butter?"

"It is the best of its kind," answered the Jackal; "only be sure you put it in some cool place, and don't open it till it is wanted." And taking the money, he ran away.

A short time afterward the woman discovered how she had been cheated, and was very angry, but the Jackal was by that time far away, out of reach of punishment.

When his money was spent, the Jackal felt puzzled as to how to get a living, since no one would give him food and he could buy none. Fortunately for him, just then one of the bullocks belonging to the village died. The Jackal found it lying dead by the roadside, and he began to eat it, and ate, and ate so much that at last he had got too far into the animal's body to be seen by passers-by. Now, the weather was hot and dry. Whilst the Jackal was in it, the bullock's skin crinkled up so tightly with the heat that it became too hard for him to bite through, and so he could not get out again.

The Mahars of the village all came out to bury the dead bullock. The Jackal, who was inside it, feared that if they caught him they would kill him, and that if they did not discover him, he would be buried alive; so on their approach he called out, "People, people, take care how you touch me, for I am a great saint." The poor people were very much frightened when they heard the dead bullock talking, and thought that some mighty spirit must indeed possess it.

"Who are you, sir, and what do you want?" they cried.

"I," answered the Jackal, "am a very holy saint. I am also the god of your village, and I am very angry with you because you never worship me nor bring me offerings."

"O my Lord," they cried, "what offerings will please you? Tell us only, and we will bring you whatever you like."

"Good," he replied. "Then you must fetch here plenty of rice, plenty of flowers and a nice fat chicken; place them as an offering beside me, and pour a great deal of water over them, as you do at your most solemn feasts, and I will forgive you your sins." The Mahars did as they were commanded. They placed some rice and flowers, and the best chicken they could procure, beside the bullock, and poured water over it and the offering. Then, no sooner did the dry, hard Bullock's skin get wetted than it split in many places, and to the surprise of all his worshippers, the Jackal jumped out, seized the chicken in his mouth, and ran away with it through the midst of them into the jungle. The Mahars ran after him over hedges and ditches for many, many miles, but he got away in spite of them all.

On, on he ran — on, on, for a very long way — until at last he came to a place where a little kid lived under a little sicakai tree. All her relations and friends were away, and when she saw him coming she thought to herself, "Unless I frighten this Jackal, he will eat me." So she ran as hard as she could up against the sicakai tree, which made all the branches shake and the leaves go rustle, rustle, rustle. And when the Jackal heard the rustling noise he got frightened, and thought it was all the little kid's friends coming to help her. And she called out to him, "Run away, Jackal, run away. Thousands and thousands of Jackals have run away at that sound — run away for your life." And the Jackal was so frightened that he ran away. So, he who had deceived so many was outwitted by a simple little kid!

After this the Jackal found his way back to his own village, where the Barber lived, and there for some time he used to prowl round the houses every night and live upon any bones he could find. The villagers did not like his coming, but did not know how to catch him, until one night his old friend the Barber (who had never forgiven him for stealing the fruit from the garden) caught him in a great net, having before made many unsuccessful attempts to do so. "Aha!" cried the Barber, "I 've got you at last, my friend. You did not escape death from the cucumber-knife for nothing! you won't get away this time. Here, wife! wife! see what a prize I 've got." The Barber's wife came running to the door, and the Barber gave her the Jackal (after he had tied all his four legs firmly together with a strong rope), and said to her, "Take this animal into the house, and be sure you don't let him escape, while I go and get a knife to kill him with."

The Barber's wife did as she was bid, and taking the Jackal into the house, laid him down on the floor. But no sooner had the Barber gone than the Jackal said to her, "Ah, good woman, your husband will return directly and put me to death. Foi the love of heaven, loosen the rope round my feet before he comes, for one minute only, and let me drink a little water from that puddle by the door, for my throat is parched with thirst."

"No, no, friend Jackal," answered the Barber's wife. "I know well enough what you 'll do. No sooner shall I have untied your feet than you will run away, and when my husband returns and finds you are gone, he will beat me."

"Indeed, indeed, I will not run away," he replied. "Ah, kind mother, have pity on me, only for one little moment."

Then the Barber's wife thought, "Well, it is hard not to grant the poor beast's last request; he will not live long enough to have many more pleasures." So she untied the Jackal's legs and held him by a rope, that he might drink from the puddle. But quick as possible, he gave a jump and a twist and a pull, and, jerking the rope out of her hand, escaped once more into the jungle.

For some time he roamed up and down, living on what he could get in this village or that, until he had wandered very far away from the country where the Barber lived. At last one day, by chance, he passed a certain cottage, in which there dwelt a very poor Brahmin, who had seven daughters.

As the Jackal passed by, the Brahmin was saying to himself, "Oh, dear me! what can I do for my seven daughters? I shall have to support them all my life, for they are much too poor ever to get married. If a dog or a jackal were to offer to take one off my hands, he should have her."

Next day the Jackal called on the Brahmin, and said to him, "You said yesterday, if a Jackal or a dog were to offer to marry one of your daughters, you would let him have her; will you, therefore accept me as a son-in-law?"

The poor Brahmin felt very much embarrassed, but it was certain he had said the words, and therefore he felt in honour bound not to retract, although he had little dreamed of ever being placed in such a predicament. Just at that moment all the seven daughters began crying for bread, and the father had no bread to give them.

Observing this, the Jackal continued, "Let me marry one of your seven daughters and I will take care of her. It will at least leave you one less to provide for, and I will see that she never needs food."

Then the Brahmin's heart was softened, and he gave the Jackal his eldest daughter in marriage, and the Jackal took her home to his den in the high rocks.

Now you will say there never was a Jackal so clever as this. Very true, for this was not a common Jackal, or he could never have done all that I have told you. This Jackal was, in fact, a great Rajah in disguise, who, to amuse himself, took the form of a Jackal; for he was a great magician as well as a great prince.

The den to which he took the Brahmin's daughter looked like quite a common hole in the rocks on the outside, but inside it was a splendid palace, adorned with silver, and gold, and ivory and precious stones. But even his own wife did not know that he was not always a Jackal, for the Rajah never took his human form except every morning very early, when he used to take off the Jackal skin and wash it and brush it, and put it on again.

After he and his wife, the Brahmin's daughter, had lived up in their home in the rocks happily for some time, who should the Jackal see one day but his father-in-law, the old Brahmin, climbing up the hill to come and pay him a visit. The Jackal was vexed to see the Brahmin, for he knew he was very poor, and thought he had most likely come to beg; and so it was. The Brahmin said to him, "Son-in-law, let me come into your cave and rest a little while. I want to ask you to help me, for I am very poor and much in need of help."

"Don't go into my cave," said the Jackal; "it is but a poor hole, not fit for you to enter" (for he did not wish his father-in-law to see his fine palace); "but I will call my wife, that you may see I have not eaten her up, and she and you and I will talk over the matter, and see what we can do for you."

So the Brahmin, the Brahmin's daughter and the Jackal all sat down on the hillside together, and the Brahmin said, "I don't know what to do to get food for myself, my wife, and my six daughters. Son-in-law Jackal, cannot you help me?"

"It is a difficult business," answered the Jackal, "but I'll do what I can for you;" and he ran to his cave and fetched a large melon, and gave it to the Brahmin, saying, "Father-in-law, you must take this melon, and plant it in your garden, and when it grows up sell all the fruit you find upon it, and that will bring you in some money." So the Brahmin took the melon home with him and planted it in his garden.

By next day the melon that the Jackal had given him had grown up in the Brahmin's garden into a fine plant, covered with hundreds of beautiful ripe melons. The Brahmin, his wife and family were overjoyed at the sight. And all the neighbours were astonished, and said, "How fast that fine melon plant has grown in the Brahmin's garden!"

Now it chanced that a woman who lived in a house close by wanted some melons, and seeing what fine ones these were, she went down at once to the Brahmin's house and bought two or three from the Brahmin's wife. She took them home with her and cut them open; but then, lo and behold! marvel of marvels! what a wonderful sight astonished her! Instead of the thick white pulp she expected to see, the whole of the inside of the melon was composed of diamonds, rubies and emeralds; and all the seeds were enormous pearls. She immediately locked her door, and taking with her all the money she had, ran back to the Brahmin's wife and said to her, "Those were very good melons you sold me; I like them so much that I will buy all the others on your melon plant." And giving her the money she took home all the rest of the melons. Now this cunning woman told none of her friends of the treasure she had found, and the poor, stupid Brahmin and his family did not know what they had lost, for they had never thought of opening any of the melons; so that for all the precious stones they sold they only got a few pice, which was very hard. Next day, when they looked out of the window, the melon plant was again covered with fine ripe melons, and again the woman who had bought those which had grown the day before came and bought them all. And this went on for several days. There were so many melons, and all the melons were so full of precious stones, that the woman who bought them had enough to fill the whole of one room in her house with diamonds, rubies, emeralds and pearls.

At last, however, the wonderful melon plant began to wither, and when the woman came to buy melons one morning, the Brahmin's wife was obliged to say to her, in a sad voice, "Alas! there are no more melons on our melon plant." And the woman went back to her own house very much disappointed.

That day the Brahmin and his wife and children had no money in the house to buy food with, and they all felt very unhappy to think that the fine melon plant had withered. But the Brahmin's youngest daughter, who was a clever girl, thought, "Though there are no more melons fit to sell on our melon plant, perhaps I may be able to find one or two shriveled ones, which, if cooked, will give us something for dinner." So she went out to look, and searching carefully amongst the thick leaves, found two or three withered little melons still remaining. These she took into the house and began cutting them up to cook, when — more wonderful than wonderful! — within each little melon she found a number of small emeralds, rubies, diamonds and pearls! The girl called her father and mother and her five sisters, crying, "See what I have found! See these precious stones and pearls. I dare say, inside all the melons we sold there were as good or better than these. No wonder that woman was so anxious to buy them all! See, father — see, mother — see, sisters!"

Then they were all overjoyed to see the treasure, but the Brahmin said, "What a pity we have lost all the benefit of my son-in-law the Jackal's good gift by not knowing its worth! I will go at once to that woman, and try and make her give us back the melons she took."

So he went to the melon-buyer's house, and said to her, "Give me back the melons you took from me, who did not know their worth."

She answered, "I don't know what you mean."

He replied, "You were very deceitful; you bought melons full of precious stones from us poor people, who did not know what they were worth, and you only paid for them the price of common melons; give me some of them back, I pray you."

But she said, "I bought common melons from your wife, and made them all into common soup long ago; therefore talk no further nonsense about jewels, but go about your business." And she turned him out of the house. Yet all this time she had a whole roomful of the emeralds, diamonds, rubies and pearls that she had found in the melons the Brahmin's wife had sold her.

The Brahmin returned home and said to his wife, "I cannot make that woman give me back any of the melons you sold her; but give me the precious stones our daughter has just found, and I will sell them to a jeweller and bring home some money." So he went to the town, and took the precious stones to a jeweller, and said to him, "What will you give me for these?"

But no sooner did the jeweller see them than he said, "How could such a poor man as you become possessed of such precious stones? You must have stolen them: you are a thief! You have stolen these from my shop, and now come to sell them to me!"

"No, no, sir; indeed no, sir," cried the Brahmin.

"Thief, thief!" shouted the jeweller.

"In truth, no sir," said the Brahmin; "my son-in-law, the Jackal, gave me a melon plant, and in one of the melons I found these jewels."

"I don't believe a word you say," screamed the jeweller (and he began beating the Brahmin, whom he held by the arm); "give up those jewels which you have stolen from my shop."

"No, I won't," roared the Brahmin; "oh! oh-o! oh-o-o! don't beat me so; I did n't steal them." But the jeweller was determined to get the jewels; so he beat the Brahmin and called the police, who came running up to his assistance, and shouted till a great crowd of people had collected round his shop. Then he said to the Brahmin, "Give me up the jewels you stole from me, or I 'll give you to the police, and you shall be put in jail." The Brahmin tried to tell his story about his son-in-law, the Jackal but of course nobody believed him; and he was obliged to give the precious stones to the jeweller in order to escape the police, and to run home as fast as he could. And every one thought the jeweller was very kind to let him off so easily.

All his family were very unhappy when they heard what had befallen him. But his wife said, "You had better go again to our son-in-law, the Jackal, and see what he can do for us."

So next day the Brahmin climbed the hill again, as he had done before, and went to call upon the Jackal. When the Jackal saw him coming he was not very well pleased. So he went to meet him, and said, "Father-in-law, I did not expect to see you again so soon."

"I merely came to see how you were," answered the Brahmin, "and to tell you how poor we are; and how glad we should be of any help you can give us."

"What have you done with all the melons I gave you?" asked the Jackal.

"Ah," answered the Brahmin, "that is a sad story!" And beginning at the beginning, he related how they had sold almost all the melons without knowing their value; and how the few precious stones they had found had been taken from him by the jeweller.

When the Jackal heard this he laughed very much, and said, "I see it is no use giving such unfortunate people as you gold or jewels, for they will only bring you into trouble. Come, I 'll give you a more useful present."

So, running into his cave, he fetched thence a small chattee, and gave it to the Brahmin, saying, "Take this chattee; whenever you or any of the family are hungry, you will always find in it as good a dinner as this." And putting his paw into the chattee, he extracted thence currie and rice, pilau, and all sorts of good things, enough to feast a hundred men; and the more he took out of the chattee, the more remained inside.

When the Brahmin saw the chattee and smelt the good dinner, his eyes glistened for joy; and he embraced the Jackal, saying, "Dear son-in-law, you are the only support of our house.' And he took his new present carefully home with him.

After this, for some time, the whole family led a very happy life, for they never wanted good food; every day the Brahmin, his wife and his six daughters found inside the chattee a most delicious dinner; and every day, when they had dined, they placed it on a shelf, to find it replenished when next it was needed.

But it happened that hard by there lived another Brahmin, a very great man, who was much in the Rajah's confidence; and this man smelt daily the smell of a very nice dinner, which puzzled him a great deal. The rich Brahmin thought it smelt even nicer than his own dinner, for which he paid so much, and yet it seemed to come from the poor Brahmin's little cottage. So one day he determined to find out all about it; and, going to call on his neighbour, he said to him, "Every day, at about twelve o'clock, I smell such a very nice dinner — much nicer than my own; and it seems to come from your house. You must live on very good things, I think, although you seem to every one to be so very poor."

Then, in the pride of his heart, the poor Brahmin invited his rich neighbour to come and dine with him, and lifting the magic chattee down from the shelf, took out of it such delicate fare as the other had never before tasted. And in an evil hour he proceeded to tell his friend of the wondrous properties of the chattee, which his son-in-law, the Jackal, had given him, and how it never was empty. No sooner had the great man learned all this than he went to the Rajah, and said to him, "There is a poor Brahmin in the town who possesses a wonderful chattee, which is always filled with the most delicious dinner. I should not feel authorized to deprive him of it; but if it pleased your Highness to take it from him, he could not complain."

The Rajah, hearing this, determined to see and taste for himself. So he said, "I should very much like to see this chattee with my own eyes." And he accompanied the rich Brahmin to the poor Brahmin's house. The poor Brahmin was overjoyed at being noticed by the Rajah himself, and gladly exhibited the various excellences of the chattee; but no sooner did the Rajah taste the dinner it contained than he ordered his guards to seize it and take it away to the palace, in spite of the Brahmin's tears and protestations. Thus, for a second time, he lost the benefit of his son-in-law's gift.

When the Rajah had gone, the Brahmin said to his wife, "There is nothing to be done but to go again to the Jackal, and see if he can help us."

"If you don't take care, you 'll put him out of all patience at last," answered she. "I can't think why you need have gone talking about our chattee!"

When the Jackal heard the Brahmin's story, he became very cross, and said, "What a stupid old man you were to say anything about the chattee! But see, here is another, which may aid you to get back the first. Take care of it, for this is the last time I will help you." And he gave the Brahmin a chattee, in which was a stout stick tied to a very strong rope. "Take this," he said, "into the presence of those who deprived you of my other gifts, and when you open the chattee, command the stick to beat them; this it will do so effectually that they will gladly return you what you have lost; only take care not to open the chattee when you are alone, or the stick that is in it will punish your rashness."

The Brahmin thanked his son-in-law, and took away the chattee, but he found it hard to believe all that had been said. So, going through the jungle on his way home, he uncovered it, just to peep in and see if the stick were really there. No sooner had he done this than out jumped the rope, out jumped the stick; the rope seized him and bound him to a tree, and the stick beat him, and beat him, and beat him, until he was nearly killed.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" screamed the Brahmin; "what an unlucky man I am! Oh dear! oh dear! stop, please, stop! good stick, stop! what a very good stick this is!" But the stick would not stop, but beat him so much that he could hardly crawl home again.

Then the Brahmin put the rope and stick back again into the chattee, and sent to his rich neighbour and to the Rajah, and said to them, "I have a new chattee, much better than the old one; do come and see what a fine one it is." And the rich

Brahmin and the Rajah thought, "This is something good; doubtless there is a choice dinner in this chattee also, and we will take it from this foolish man, as we did the other." So they went down to meet the Brahmin in the jungle, taking with them all their followers and attendants. Then the Brahmin uncovered his chattee, saying, "Beat, stick, beat! beat them every one!" and the stick jumped out, and the rope jumped out, and the rope caught hold of the Rajah and the rich Brahmin and all their attendants, and tied them fast to the trees that grew around, and the stick ran from one to another, beating, beating, beating — beating the Rajah, beating his courtiers — beating the rich Brahmin, beating his attendants, and beating all their followers; while the poor Brahmin cried with all his might, "Give me back my chattee! give me back my chattee!"

At this the Rajah and his people were very much frightened, and thought they were going to be killed. And the Rajah said to the Brahmin, "Take away your stick, only take away your stick, and you shall have back your chattee." So the Brahmin put the stick and rope back into the chattee, and the Rajah returned him the dinner-making chattee. And all the people felt very much afraid of the Brahmin, and respected him very much.

Then he took the chattee containing the rope and stick to the house of the woman who had bought the melons, and the rope caught her and the stick beat her; and the Brahmin cried, "Return me those melons! return me those melons!"

And the woman said, "Only make your stick stop beating me and you shall have back all the melons." So he ordered the stick back into the chattee, and she returned them to him forthwith— a whole roomful of melons full of diamonds, pearls, emeralds, and rubies.

The Brahmin took them home to his wife, and going into the town, with the help of his good stick, forced the jeweller who had deprived him of the little emeralds, rubies, diamonds and pearls he had taken to sell to give them back to him again, and having accomplished this, he returned to his family, and from that time they all lived very happily. Then, one day, the Jackal's wife invited her six sisters to come and pay her a visit. Now the youngest sister was more clever than any of the others; and it happened that, very early in the morning, she saw her brother-in-law, the Jackal, take off the Jackal skin and wash it and brush it, and hang it up to dry; and when he had taken off the jackal-skin coat, he looked the handsomest prince that ever was seen. Then his little sister-in-law ran, quickly and quietly, and stole away the Jackal-skin coat, and threw it on the fire and burned it. And she awoke her sister, and said, "Sister, sister, your husband is no longer a jackal: see, that is he standing by the door."

So the Jackal Rajah's wife ran to the door to meet her husband, and because the jackal's skin was burned, and he could wear it no longer, he continued to be a man for the rest of his life, and gave up playing all jackal-like pranks; and he and his wife, and his father and mother and sisters-in-law, lived very happily all the rest of their days.

The Bird of Truth

ONCE upon a time there was a very poor fisherman, who lived in a little hut on the banks of a river. This river, although deep, was calm and clear, and, gliding from the sun and noise, would hide itself among the trees, reeds, and brambles, in order to listen to the birds who delighted it with their songs.

One day when the fisherman went out in his boat to cast his nets, he saw a casket of crystal slowly drifting along with the stream. He rowed toward it, but what was his horror at seeing two little babies, apparently twins, lying in it upon a bundle of cotton! The poor fisherman pitied them, took them out, and carried them home to his wife.

"What have you got there?" she exclaimed, as he presented them to her. "We have eight children already, and as if that were not enough, you must bring me some more!"

"Wife," replied the poor fisherman, "what could I do? I found these dear little creatures floating on the river below, and they would have died of hunger, or have been drowned, if I had not rescued them. Heaven, which has sent us these two more children, will assist us to provide for them."

And so it proved; and the little ones, a boy and a girl, grew up healthy and robust, together with the eight other children. They were both so good, so docile, and so peaceable, that the fisherman and his wife loved them exceedingly, and always held them up as examples to the other children; but they, envious and enraged, did them a thousand injustices and injuries. To escape from these cruelties, the twins would take refuge together among the thickets and on the river's banks; there they would divert themselves with the birds, and carry crumbs of bread to them; and the birds, grateful to them for their kindness, would fly to meet them, and teach them the bird-language. The children learned to converse with the birds very quickly, and thus they could amuse themselves with their feathered friends, who also taught them many other very good and useful things, one of them being how to get up early in the morning, and another, how to sing. One day when the fisherman's children were more annoying than they had ever been before, they said to the twins:

"We are the true-born children of Christians, but you, with all your neatness and superiority, are but castaways, without any other father or mother than the river, and belong to the toads and frogs!"

Upon receiving this insult the poor brother and sister were so filled with shame and distress that they determined to go right away from home and travel in search of their real parents. At the early dawn next day they got up and went forth without any one knowing it, and began their journey, travelling they knew not whither.

Half the day passed by, and they had not perceived as yet any abode, nor seen a single living being. They were hungry, thirsty, and tired, when on turning round a hill-side, they discovered a little house and, on reaching it, they found it empty and its inhabitants absent.

Thoroughly disheartened, they seated themselves on a bench in the doorway to rest. After a little while they noticed a number of swallows collected together under the eaves of the roof, and as these birds are such chatterboxes, they began to prattle with one another. Having learned the language of birds, the children knew what the swallows said.

"Holloa! my lady friend," said one of the birds, who had a somewhat rustic air about it, to another that was of a very elegant and distinguished mien, "my eyes are glad to see you once more! I thought you had forgotten your country friends. How do you live in the palace?"

"I possess the nest of my ancestors," replied the other, "and as yet they have not disinherited me, although, like yours, it is a century old. But tell me before all," continued she with admirable finesse, "how you and all your family are."

"Well, thank heaven, for although I have had my little Mariguita laid up with an inflammation of the eyes that was within an ace of leaving her blind, when I obtained our old remedy, the *pito-real*, it cured her as if by magic."

"But what news have you to relate to me, friend Beatrice? Does the nightingale still sing well? Does the lark soar as high as of yore? Does the linnet still prune itself?"

"Sister," responded the swallow, "I have nothing but downright scandals to tell you of. Our flock, which formerly was so innocent and temperate, is utterly lost, and has quite taken to the manners of mankind. It is heartbreaking!"

"What! Simple customs and innocence not to be found in the country, nor among birds? My dear friend, what do you tell me?"

"The pure truth and nothing more. Just figure to yourself that on our arrival here, whom should we meet but those chattering linnets, who went off in search of cold and storm when the spring came with long days and bright flowers! We tried to dissuade the crazy creatures, but they answered us with the utmost insolence."

"What did they say?"

"They said to us —

'Whither do we go?
Whence come *you*, gossips,
Who travel so little
And talk so much?'

This was their reply to us, and on hearing it, we made them march to double-quick time."

"What do I hear!" exclaimed the interlocutor. "That any one has dared to accuse us, the most truthful and discreet of birds, of being gossips?"

"Then what will you think when I tell you," said the first speaker, "that the lark, who was so timid and ladylike, has become an insolent pilferer, and that —

> The lady lark upon her flight
>   Pilfers pulse and pilfers maize
> Before the very sower's sight,
>   And at his anger pertly says,
> 'Sower, sower, more seed sow,
>   As that sown can never grow'?"

"I am astounded!"

"That is only half my story. When we arrived here, and I wished to enter my nest, I found a shameless sparrow making himself quite at home in it. 'This nest is mine,' I said to him. 'Yours?' he answered rudely, and began to laugh. 'Mine and mine only.' 'Property is robbery,' piped he quite coolly. 'Sir, are you crazy?' I said to him. 'My ancestors built this nest, my parents educated me in it, and in it I mean to bring up my children.' Then at seeing me fainting, all my companions began to weep. By the time I recovered my consciousness, our husbands had put an end to the thieving rascal. But you, sister, never see such scandals in the palace."

"Don't we! Ah, if you only knew!"

"Do tell us! do tell us!" exclaimed all the swallows with one voice. When silence had been re-established, thanks to a loud and prolonged hus-s-s-sh, uttered by an elder, the court dame began her story in these terms.

"You must know that the king fell in love with the youngest daughter of a tailor who lived near the palace, and married her; the girl deserved his love, for she was as good as she was beautiful, and as modest as she was discreet. It so happened that the king had to go to the wars and leave his poor wife in the saddest and most perplexed position, for his ministers and courtiers who were very indignant at having a tailor's daughter for their queen, conspired to ruin her. And they availed themselves of the first opportunity. During the king's absence beautiful twins were born, a boy and a girl; but the wicked conspirators sent to tell him that the queen had for children a cat and a serpent.

"When the king received this intelligence, he was furious, and sent off a royal mandate that the queen should be entombed alive, and the children cast into the river. This was done: the beautiful queen was shut up in a stone vault, and her little darling twins were placed in a crystal coffer, and left to the mercy of the stream."

When they heard the fate of the poor queen and her innocent babes, the swallows, who are very kind and affectionate, began to lament most heartily, whilst the twins looked at each other in amazement, suspecting it to be very probable that they themselves were the castaway children.

The city swallow continued her narrative:

"But now hear how God frustrated the plots of these traitors. The queen was entombed; but her attendant, who was very devoted to her, contrived to make a hole in the wall, and supplied her with food through it, as we do to our little ones through our nests, and thus the lady lives, although a life of misery. Her children were rescued by a good fisherman, who has brought them up, so a friend of mine, Martin Fisher, who lives on the banks of the river, has informed me."

The twins, who had heard the whole story, were delighted that they had learned the language of birds; which indeed, is a proof that we should never neglect any opportunity of learning for, when least we think it, what we have learned may prove of great utility to us.

"So then," said the swallows joyfully, "when these children are older, they will be able to regain their place at their father's side, and liberate their mother."

"That is not so easy," said the narrator, "because they will not be able to prove their identity, nor prove their mother's innocence, nor the malice of the Ministry. There is only one method by which they would be able to undeceive the king."

"And what is that? What is that?" cried all the swallows together. "And how do you know it?"

"I know it," responded the narrator, "because one day when I was passing by the palace garden, I met and had a chat with a cuckoo, who, as you know, is a conjuror, and can foretell what will happen. As we were discoursing with each other on the affairs of the palace, he said to me ——"

The children and the swallows were listening now with redoubled attention, and even the young swallows were thrusting their little bald heads so far out of their nests, that they were in great peril of falling.

"'The only one who is able to persuade the king,' said the cuckoo to me, 'is the Bird of Truth, who speaks the language of men, although they for the most part do not know truth, and do not wish to understand it.' 'And this bird, where is it?' I asked the cuckoo. 'This bird,' he answered, 'is in the castle of Go and Return Not; the castle is guarded by a ferocious giant who only sleeps one quarter of an hour in the day. If when he wakes up any one should be within reach of his tremendous arm, he seizes and swallows him as we should a mosquito.'"

"And where is this castle?" inquired the inquisitive Beatrice.

"That is what I do not know," responded her friend; "all that I know about it is, that not far from it is a tower in which dwells a wicked witch, who knows the way and will point it out to any one who will bring her from the fountain that flows there, the Water of Many Colours, which water she makes use of in her enchantments. But I should also tell you that she would like to destroy the Bird of Truth, though as no one is able to kill this bird, what she and her friend, the giant, do is to keep it a prisoner guarded by the Birds of Falsehood who will not let it speak a single word."

"Then will nobody be able to inform the poor queen's son where they have hidden the Bird of Truth?" inquired the country swallows.

"Nobody," replied the city bird, "but a pious red owl, who lives as a hermit in the desert, but who knows no more of the language of men then the word 'Cross,' which he learned when, at Calvary, he beheld the Crucifixion of the Redeemer, and which he has never ceased from sorrowfully repeating. And thus he will not be able to understand the prince, even supposing the impossible event should ever happen of the boy finding him out. But, my dear friends, I must say good-bye, for I have spent the whole afternoon in this pleasant chat. The sun is seeking his nest in the depths of the sea, and I am going to seek mine, where my little ones will be wondering what has happened to me. Good-bye, friend Beatrice."

So saying, the swallow took to flight, and the children in their joy, feeling neither hunger nor fatigue, got up and pursued their way in the same direction that the bird had flown.

At the hour of evening service the children arrived at a city which they imagined must be that in which the king, their father, dwelt. They begged a good woman to give them shelter for the night, and this, seeing they were so well-spoken and well-mannered, she kindly granted.

The following morning had scarcely dawned when the girl arose and tidied the house, and the boy drew the water and watered the garden, so that when the good woman got up she found all the housework done. She was so pleased with this that she proposed to the children that they should remain and live with her. The boy said that his sister might, but that it was necessary for him to arrange some business matters, for which he had come to the city. So he departed, and followed a chance road, praying to heaven to guide his steps and bring his enterprise to a successful ending.

For three days he followed various byways, but without seeing any vestige of the tower; on the fourth, sad and weary he seated himself under the shadow of a tree. After a short time he saw a little turtle-dove arrive and rest among the branches of the tree; so he said to it in its own language:

"Little turtle-dove, I wish you could tell me where the castle of Go and Return Not is?"

"Poor boy," responded the turtle-dove, "who bore you such ill-will as to send you there?"

"It is my good or my evil fortune," replied the boy.

"Then if you wish to know it," said the bird, "follow the wind, which to-day blows toward it!"

Then the boy thanked the turtle-dove and recommenced his journey, following the course of the wind as it changed and chopped about to different points of the compass. The country gradually grew sadder and more arid; and, as night approached, the path led between bare and sombre rocks, a vast black mass among them being the tower wherein dwelt the witch whom the boy was in search of. The sight of the hideous place terrified him at first; but as he was brave — like every one whose aim is the furtherance of a good work — he advanced boldly. When he reached the tower, he picked up a big stone and struck the gate with it three times; the hollows of the rocks reverberated with the sounds, as if sighs were uttered from their very entrails.

Then the door opened, and there appeared in the doorway an old woman carrying a candle that lit up her face, which was so wrinkled and so frightful that the poor boy recoiled in horror. Quite an army of beetles, lizards, salamanders, spiders and other vermin surrounded the witch.

"How dare you disturb me, impudent beggar," she exclaimed, "by coming to knock at my door? What do you want? Speak quickly!"

"Madam," said the boy, "knowing that you alone know the way which leads to the castle of Go and Return Not, I come to ask you, if you please, to point it out to me."

The old woman made a grimace, intended for a mocking smile, and answered:

"Very well; but now it is too late. You shall go to-morrow. Come in, and you shall sleep with these little insects."

"I am not able to stay," replied the boy. "It is necessary that I should go at once, as I have to return by daybreak to the place whence I came."

"May dogs worry you, and cats tear you, you stubborn boy," growled the old witch angrily. "If I tell you the way," she added, "it will only be upon condition that you bring me this jar full of the Water of Many Colours, which flows from the fountain in the courtyard of the castle; and if you do not bring it to me, I will change you into a lizard for all eternity."

"Agreed!" cried the boy in return.

Then the old woman called a poor dog, which looked very thin and wretched, and said to it:

"Up! conduct this good-for-naught to the castle of Go and

Return Not, and be careful that you inform my friend of his arrival."

The dog snarled, shook himself savagely, and set forth. At the end of about two hours they arrived in front of a very black, enormous, and gloomy castle, whose portals stood wide open, though neither light nor sound gave any indication that it was inhabited; even the rays of the moon, as they were reflected upon the sombre and lifeless mass, seemed to make it still more horrible.

As he went forward the dog began to howl; but the boy, who knew not whether this was the giant's hour for sleep, stopped and rested himself timorously against the trunk of a withered and leafless wild olive, which was the only tree to be found in that parched and naked district.

"Heaven help me!" exclaimed the boy.

"Cross! cross!" responded a sad voice among the branches of the olive. Joyfully the boy recognized the hermit owl which the swallow had mentioned, and said to it in the language of birds:

"Poor little owl, I beg you will help and guide me. I am come in search of the Bird of Truth, and I have to carry the Water of Many Colours to the witch of the tower."

"Do not do that," responded the owl; "but when you have filled the jar with the clear, pure water that flows from a spring at the foot of the fountain of Water of Many Colours, go in quickly to the aviary, which you will find in front of the doorway; do not take any notice of the various coloured birds that will come to meet you and deafen you by all shouting out together that they are the Bird of Truth; then seize a little white bird which the others thrust on one side and persecute ceaselessly, but cannot kill, because it cannot die. But go quickly, for at this moment the giant is just going to sleep, and his sleep only lasts for a quarter of an hour!"

The boy began to run; he entered into the courtyard, where he found that the fountain had many spouts whence poured waters of different colours, but he did not look at them; he filled his jar at the spring of pure, clear water which flowed from the spring at the foot of the fountain, and then made his way to the aviary. Scarcely had he entered it, when he was surrounded by a troop of birds, some plovers, some black ravens, and others gorgeous peacocks, each one declaring itself to be the Bird of Truth. The boy did not linger with them, but went right forward, and finding the white bird he was in search of huddled in the corner, he took it, placed it in his bosom, and went forth, not however, without distributing a few good blows among the enemies of the Bird of Truth.

The boy did not cease running until he reached the witch's tower. When he arrived, the old wretch seized the jar and flung all the contents at him, thinking that it was the water of many colours, and that he would be changed by it into a parrot; but as it was pure and clear water, the boy only became handsomer than he was before.

At the same time she had drenched all the insects, who were really people that had arrived there with the same intention as the little prince, and who were immediately changed back into their original forms — the beetles into knights errant, the lizards into princesses, grasshoppers into dancers, crickets into musicians, flies into journalists, spiders into young ladies, *curianas* (black flies) into students, the weevils into boys, and so forth. When the old witch saw this, she seized a broom and flew away. Then the disenchanted people, the ladies, gentlemen, girls and boys thanked their liberator and accompanied him on his way back to the city.

You may imagine how delighted his sister was when she saw the young prince return with the Bird of Truth. But a very great difficulty still remained, and that was, how the bird could be got into the presence of the king without the knowledge of the courtiers, who were interested in preventing him from discovering the crime which they had committed. And what was more, the Court having learned that the Bird of Truth had been found, the news inspired such dread that few were able to sleep tranquilly in their beds. All kinds of weapons were prepared against it; some sharpened, others envenomed; hawks were trained to pursue it; cages were prepared in which to imprison it, if it were found impossible to kill it; they slandered it, saying that its whiteness was an artificial paint, with which it coated its black plumage; they satirized and ridiculed it in every possible manner. At last so much was said about the Bird of Truth, that it reached the king's ears, who wished to see it; and the more that the courtiers intrigued to prevent it, the more he desired to view the bird. Finally, his Majesty issued a proclamation, that whoever had the Bird of Truth in his possession, was to present himself without delay to the king.

This was the very thing that the boy had wished for. So he hastened to the palace, carrying the Bird of Truth in his bosom; but, as you can imagine, the courtiers would not allow him to enter. Then the bird, taking flight, entered into the royal household by a window, and presenting itself before the king, said:

"Sir, I am the Bird of Truth; the boy who brought me here in his bosom has not been allowed by the courtiers to enter."

The king commanded that the boy should be brought in at once, and he entered with his sister, who had accompanied him to the palace. When they came into the royal presence the king inquired who they were.

"That the Bird of Truth can tell your Majesty," said the boy.

And, questioned by the king, the bird answered that the children were his Majesty's own, and informed him of all that had happened. As soon as the king heard the story of the treason, with tears of joy he clasped the children in his arms, and ordered masons to open the vault in which the good queen had been so many years entombed. When the poor lady came forth she was so white that she looked like a statue of marble; but as soon as she beheld her children, the blood rushed from her heart to her cheeks, and she became again as beautiful as she had ever been before. The king embraced her, and seated her on the throne with her children by her side. Then he ordered the good fisherman to be fetched, and created him chief of the Ministry of Fishing; and the queen's faithful attendant, who had saved her mistress's life, he pensioned off, and created a duchess, and he distributed many other gifts and benefits to celebrate the most joyful occasion of his life.

The Two Genies

EVERY one in the province of Candahar knows the adventures of young Rustem. He was the only son of a Mirza of that country — or as we might say, a lord. His father, the Mirza, had a good estate. Rustem was to be married to the daughter of a Mirza of his own rank, as both families ardently desired. He was intended to be the comfort of his parents, to make his wife happy, and to be happy with her.

But, unfortunately, he had seen the Princess of Cashmere at the great fair at Cabul, which is the most important fair in the whole world. And this was the reason why the old Prince of Cashmere had brought his daughter to the fair: he had lost the two most precious objects in his treasury; one was a diamond as big as my thumb, on which, by an art then known to the Indians, but now forgotten, a portrait of his daughter was engraved; the other was a javelin, which of its own accord would strike whatever mark the owner wished.

A fakir in his Highness's train had stolen these treasures, and carried them to the Princess. "Take the greatest care of these two things," said he; "your fate depends upon them." Then he went away, and was seen no more.

The Prince of Cashmere, in great despair at his loss, determined to travel to the fair at Cabul, to see whether among all the merchants who collected there from the four quarters of the earth, there might not be one who had his diamond or his weapon. He took his daughter with him wherever he went, and unknown to him she carried the diamond safe in her girdle; but as for the javelin, which she could not conveniently hide, she left it in Cashmere, safely locked up in a large Chinese chest.

At Cabul she and Rustem saw each other, and they fell in love, with all the ardour of their nation. As a love-token the Princess gave him the diamond; and, at parting, Rustem promised to go to see her secretly in Cashmere.

The young Mirza had two favourite attendants who served him as secretaries, stewards and body-servants. One was named Topaz; he was handsome and well-made, as fair as a Circassian beauty, as gentle and obliging as an Armenian, and as wise as a Parsee. The other was called Ebony; a good-looking Negro, more active and more industrious than Topaz, and one who never made objections. To them he spoke about his journey. Topaz tried to dissuade him with the cautious zeal of a servant who is anxious not to offend, and reminded him of all the risks. How could he leave two families in despair, and cut his parents to the heart? He shook Rustem's purpose; but Ebony once more confirmed it, and removed his scruples.

The young man had not money enough for so long a journey. Wise Topaz would have refused to get it for him. Ebony provided it. He quietly stole his master's diamond, and had a false one made exactly like it, which he put in its place, pledging the real one to an Armenian for many thousands of rupees.

As soon as Rustem had the rupees he was ready to start. An elephant was loaded with his baggage, and they set out on horseback.

"I took the liberty," said Topaz to his master, "of remonstrating against your enterprise; but after speaking it was my duty to obey. I am your slave. I love you, and will follow you to the end of the world. But let us consult the oracle which is on our way."

Rustem agreed. The answer of the oracle was this: "If you turn to the east you will turn to the west." Rustem could not understand this. Topaz maintained that it boded no good; Ebony, always accommodating, persuaded him that it was very favourable.

There was yet another oracle in Cabul, which they consulted also. The Cabul oracle replied as follows: "If you possess you will not possess; if you get the best of it, you will get the worst; if you are Rustem you will not be Rustem." This saying seemed still more incomprehensible than the other.

"Beware," said Topaz.

"Fear nothing," said Ebony. And he, as may be supposed, seemed to his master to be always in the right, since he encouraged his passion and his hopes.

On leaving Cabul they marched through a great forest. Here they sat down on the grass to eat, while the horses were turned loose to feed. They were about to unload the elephant, which carried the dinner and the service, when it was discovered that Topaz and Ebony were no longer with the party. They called them loudly: the forest echoed with the names of Topaz and Ebony; the men sought them in every direction and filled the woods with their shouts, but they came back having seen no one and heard no answer. "We saw nothing," they said to Rustem, "but a vulture fighting with an eagle and plucking out all its feathers."

The history of this struggle excited Rustem's curiosity; he went to the spot on foot. He saw no vulture or eagle, but he found that his elephant, still loaded with baggage, had been attacked by a huge rhinoceros. One was fighting with his horn, the other with his trunk. On seeing Rustem the rhinoceros retreated, and the elephant was led back. But now the horses were gone. "Strange things happen to travellers in the forest!" exclaimed Rustem. The servants were dismayed, and their master was in despair at having lost his horses, his favourite negro, and the sage Topaz, for whom he had always had a regard, though he did not always agree with his opinion.

He was comforting himself with the hope of soon finding himself at the feet of the beautiful Princess of Cashmere, when he met a fine striped ass, which a vigorous peasant was beating violently with a stick. There is nothing rarer, swifter, or more beautiful than an ass of this kind. This one retorted on the rustic for his thrashing by kicks which might have uprooted an oak. The young Mirza very naturally took the ass's part, for it was a beautiful beast. The peasant ran off, crying out to the ass: "I will pay you out yet!" The ass thanked its liberator after its fashion, went up to him, fawned on him, and received his caresses.

Having dined, Rustem mounted him, and took the road to Cashmere with his servants, some on foot and some riding the elephant.

Hardly had he mounted his ass, when the animal turned toward Cabul, instead of proceeding on the way to Cashmere. In vain his rider tugged at the bridle, jerked at the bit, squeezed his ribs with his knees, drove the spurs into his flanks, gave him his head, pulled him up, whipped him right and left. The obstinate beast still made direct to Cabul.

Rustem was growing desperate, when he met a camel-driver, who said to him:

"You have a very stubborn ass there, master, which insists on carrying you where you do not want to go. If you will let me have him, I will give you four of my camels, which you may choose for yourself."

Rustem thanked Providence for having sent so good a bargain in his way. "Topaz was all wrong," thought he, "to say that my journey would be unlucky." He mounted the finest of the camels, and the others followed. He soon rejoined his little caravan, and went on his way toward happiness.

He had not marched more than four miles, when he was stopped by a torrent, wide, deep and impetuous, tumbling over rocks all white with foam. On each shore rose precipitous cliffs, which bewildered the eyes and chilled the heart of man. There was no way of getting across, of turning to the right hand or to the left.

"I am beginning to fear," said Rustem, "that Topaz may have been right to reprehend me for this journey, and I very wrong to undertake it. If he were but here he might give me some good advice, and if I had Ebony, he at any rate would comfort me, and suggest some expedient. As it is I have no one left to help me."

His dismay was increased by that of his followers. The night was very dark, and they spent it in lamentations. At last fatigue and dejection brought sleep to the love-sick traveller. He awoke, however, at daybreak, and saw a fine marble bridge built across the torrent from shore to shore.

Then what exclamations, what cries of astonishment and delight! "Is it possible? Is it a dream? What a marvel! It is magic! Dare we cross it?" All the Mirza's train fell on their knees, got up again, went to the bridge, kissed the ground, looked up to heaven, lifted their hands; then tremulously set foot on it, went over, and came back in perfect ecstasy, and Rustem said, "Heaven is on my side this time. Topaz did not know what he was saying. The oracles were in my favour. Ebony was right; but why is he not here?"

Hardly had the caravan crossed in safety, when the bridge fell into the torrent with an appalling crash.

"So much the better!" cried Rustem. "God be praised! He does not intend me to return to my own country, where I should be only a private gentleman. He means me to marry the Princess. I shall be Prince of Cashmere. In that way, when I possess my Princess, I shall not possess my humble rank in Candahar; I shall be Rustem, and I shall not, since I shall be a great prince. There is a great deal of the oracle interpreted in my favour. The rest will be explained in the same way. I am too happy! But why is not Ebony at my side? I regret him a thousand times more than Topaz!"

He rode a few miles farther in great glee; but as evening fell, a chain of mountains, steeper than a rampart, and higher than the Tower of Babel would have been when finished, entirely closed the road against the travellers, who were filled with fears.

Every one exclaimed: "It is the will of God that we should perish here. He has broken down the bridge that we may have no hope of returning; He has raised up this mountain to hinder our going forward. Oh, Rustem! Oh, hapless Mirza! We shall never see Cashmere, we shall never return to the land of Candahar!"

In Rustem's soul the keenest anguish and most complete dejection succeeded the immoderate joy and hopes which had intoxicated him. He was now very far from interpreting the oracles to his advantage: "O merciful heaven!" he cried. "Have I really lost my friend Topaz?"

As he spoke the words, heaving deep sighs and shedding bitter tears in the sight of his despairing followers, behold, the base of the mountain opened, and a long, vaulted gallery lighted by a hundred thousand torches was revealed to his dazzled eyes!

Rustem broke into exclamations of joy; his people fell on their knees or dropped down with amazement, crying out that it was a miracle, and that Rustem was destined to govern the world. Rustem himself believed it, and was uplifted beyond measure. "Ah! Ebony, my dear Ebony, where are you?" he cried. "Why are you not here to see all these wonders? How did I come to lose you? Fair Princess of Cashmere, when shall I again behold your charms?"

He marched forward with his servants, his elephant and his camels, into the tunnel under the mountain, and, at the end of it came out upon a meadow enameled with flowers and watered by brooks. Beyond this meadow avenues of trees stretched into the far distance; at the end of them was a river bordered by delightful houses in the loveliest gardens. On every side he heard concerts of voices and instruments, and saw dancing. He hurried across one of the bridges over the river, and asked the first man he met what was this beautiful country.

The man to whom he spoke replied: "You are in the province of Cashmere; the inhabitants, as you see, are holding great rejoicings. We are doing honour to the wedding of our beautiful Princess, who is about to marry a certain lord named Barbabou, to whom her father has plighted her. May heaven prolong their happiness!"

On hearing these words Rustem fell down in a swoon. The gentleman of Cashmere, supposing that he was liable to fits, had him carried to his own house, where he lay some time unconscious. The two cleverest physicians of the district were called in; they felt their patient's pulse: and he, having somewhat recovered, sobbed and sighed, and rolled his eyes, exclaiming, "Topaz, Topaz, you were right after all!"

One of the physicians said to the gentleman of Cashmere;

"I perceive by his accent that this young man comes from Candahar; the air of this country does not agree with him, and he must be sent home again. I can see by his eyes that he is mad; leave him in my hands; I will take him back to his own country and cure him." The other physician declared that his only complaint was melancholy, and that he ought to be taken to the Princess's wedding and compelled to dance.

While they were discussing his case the sick man recovered his powers; the two physicians were sent away, and Rustem remained alone with his host.

"Sir," said he, "I ask your pardon for fainting in your presence; I know that it is not good manners, and I entreat you to accept my elephant in acknowledgment of all the kindness with which you have received me."

He then related his adventures, taking good care not to mention the object of his journey. "But, in the name of Brahma," said he, "tell me who is this happy Barbabou who is to be married to the Princess of Cashmere, and why her father has chosen him for his son-in-law, and why the Princess has accepted him for her husband."

"My lord," replied the gentleman of Cashmere, "the Princess is far from having accepted him. On the contrary, she is drowned in tears, while the province rejoices over her marriage. She is shut up in the Palace Tower, and refuses to see any of the festivities prepared in her honour."

Rustem, on hearing this, felt new life in his soul, and the colour which sorrow had faded came again into his cheeks.

"Then pray tell me," he continued, "why the Prince of Cashmere persists in marrying her to Barbabou against her will."

"The facts are these," replied his friend. "Do you know that our august Prince lost some time ago a diamond and a javelin, on which his heart was greatly set?"

"I know it well," said Rustem.

"Then I must tell you," said his host, "that the Prince, in despair at hearing nothing of his two treasures, after searching for them all the world over, promised his daughter in marriage to any one who would bring him either of them. Then Barbabou arrived and brought the diamond with him; and he is to marry the Princess to-morrow."

Rustem turned pale. He muttered his thanks, took leave of his host, and went off on his dromedary to the capital where the ceremony was to take place. He reached the palace of the sovereign, announced that he had matters of importance to communicate to him, and craved an audience. He was told that the Prince was engaged in preparing for the wedding. "That is the very reason," said he, "why I wish to speak to him." In short, he was so urgent that he was admitted.

"My lord," said he, "may heaven crown your days with glory and magnificence! Your son-in-law is a rascal."

"A rascal! How dare you say so? Is that the way to speak to a Prince of Cashmere of the son-in-law he has chosen?"

"Yes, a rascal," said Rustem. "And to prove it to your Highness, here is your diamond, which I have brought back to you."

The Prince, in much amazement, compared the two diamonds and, as he knew nothing about gems, he could not tell which was the true one.

"Here are two diamonds," said he, "but I have only one daughter. I am in a strange dilemma!"

Then he sent for Barbabou, and asked him whether he had not deceived him. Barbabou swore that he had bought the diamond of an Armenian. Rustem did not say from whom he had got his, but he proposed, as a solution, that his Highness should allow him and his rival to fight in single combat on the spot.

"It is not enough that your son-in-law should possess a diamond," said he, "he ought also to show proof of valour. Do you not think it fair that the one who kills the other should marry the Princess?"

"Very good," said the Prince; "it will be a fine show for all the court. You two shall fight it out at once. The conqueror shall have the armour of the conquered man, after the custom of Cashmere; and he shall marry the Princess."

The rivals immediately descended to the palace court. On the stairs they saw a magpie and a raven. The raven cried, "Fight it out, fight it out!" the magpie, "Do not fight!" This made the Prince laugh. The rivals scarcely noticed the two birds.

The combat began. All the courtiers stood round them in a circle. The Princess still shut herself up in her tower, and would see nothing of it. She had no suspicion that her lover could be in Cashmere, and she had such a hororr of Barbabou that she would not look on. The fight went off as well as possible. Barbabou was left stone dead, and the populace were delighted, for he was ugly and Rustem very handsome — a fact which always turns the scale of public favour.

The conqueror put on the dead man's coat of mail, his scarf and his helmet, and approached the window of his mistress to the sound of trumpets, followed by all the Court. Every one was shouting: "Fair Princess, come and see your handsome bridegroom who has killed his hideous rival!" and the ladies repeated the words. The Princess unfortunately looked out of the window, and seeing the armour of the man she abhorred, she flew in despair to the Chinese trunk, and took out the fatal javelin, which darted, at her wish, to pierce her dear Rustem through a joint in his cuirass. He gave a bitter cry, and in that cry the Princess thought that she recognized the voice of her hapless lover.

She flew into the courtyard, her hair all disheveled, death in her eyes and in her heart. Rustem was lying in her father's arms. She saw him! What a moment, what a sight! Who can express the anguish, the tenderness, the horror of that meeting? She threw herself upon him and embraced him.

"These," she cried, "are the first and last kisses of your lover and destroyer." Then snatching the dart from his wound, she plunged it into her own heart, and died on the breast of the lover she adored.

Her father, horror-stricken and heartbroken, strove in vain to bring her back to life; she was no more. He broke the fatal weapon into fragments, and flung away the ill-starred diamonds:

and while preparations were proceeding for his daughter's funeral instead of her wedding, he had the bleeding but still living Rustem carried into his palace.

Rustem was laid upon a couch. The first thing he saw, one on each side of his death-bed, were Topaz and Ebony. Surprise gave him strength. "Cruel that you were," said he; "why did you desert me? The Princess might still perhaps be living if you had been at hand!"

"I have never left you for a moment," said Topaz.

"I have been always at your side," said Ebony.

"What do you mean? Why do you insult me in my last moments?" replied Rustem, in a weak voice.

"Believe me, it is true," said Topaz. "You know I never approved of this ill-advised journey, for I foresaw its disastrous end. I was the eagle which struggled with the vulture, and which the vulture plucked; I was the elephant which made off with your baggage to compel you to return home; I was the striped ass which would fain have carried you back to your father; it was I who led your horses astray, who produced the torrent which you could not cross, who raised the mountain which checked your unlucky advance; I was the physician who advised your return to your native air, and the magpie which urged you not to fight."

"I," said Ebony, "was the vulture who plucked the eagle, the rhinoceros which thrust its horn into the elephant, the peasant who beat the ass, the merchant who gave you the camels to hasten you to your ruin; I raised the bridge you crossed; I bored the mountains for you to pass; I was the physician who advised you to proceed, and the raven which encouraged you to fight."

"Alas! And remember the Oracle," added Topaz; "If you turn to the east you will turn to the west."

"Yes, here they bury the dead with their faces turned westward," said Ebony. "The Oracle was plain; why did not you understand it? You possessed and you possessed not; for you had the diamond, but it was a false one, and you did not know it; you got the best of it in battle, but you also got the worst, for you must die; you are Rustem, but you will soon cease to be so. The Oracle is fulfilled."

Even as he spoke two white wings appeared on the shoulders of Topaz, and two black wings on those of Ebony.

"What is this that I see?" cried Rustem. And Topaz and Ebony replied: "We are your two genies." "I," added Topaz, "am your good genie."

"And you, Ebony, with your black wings, are apparently my evil genie."

"As you say," replied Ebony.

Then suddenly everything vanished. Rustem found himself in his father's house, which he had not quitted, and in his bed where he had been sleeping just an hour.

He awoke with a start, bathed in sweat and greatly scared. He shouted, he called, he rang. His servant Topaz hurried up in his night-cap, yawning.

"Am I dead or alive?" cried Rustem. "Will the beautiful Princess of Cashmere recover?"

"Is your Highness dreaming?" said Topaz calmly.

"And what," cried Rustem, "has become of that cruel Ebony, with his two black wings? Is it his fault that I am dying so dreadful a death?"

"Sir, I left him upstairs, snoring. Shall I call him down?"

"The villain! He has been tormenting me these six months. It was he who took me to that fatal fair at Cabul; it was he who stole the diamond the Princess gave me; he is the sole cause of my journey, of the death of my Princess, and of the javelin-wound of which I am dying in the prime of youth."

"Make yourself easy," said Topaz. "You have never been to Cabul. There is no Princess of Cashmere; the Prince has but two sons, and they are now at school. You never had any diamond. The Princess cannot be dead since she never was born; and you are perfectly sound and well."

"What! Is it not true that you became in turn an eagle, an elephant, an ass, a doctor, and a magpie, to protect me from ill?"

"It is all a dream, sir. Our ideas are no more under our control when sleeping than when awake. The Almighty sent that string of ideas through your head, as it would seem, to give you some lesson which you may lay to heart."

"You are making game of me," said Rustem. "How long have I been sleeping?"

"Sir, you have only slept one hour."

"Well, I cannot understand it," said Rustem.

But perhaps he took the lesson to heart, and learned to doubt whether all he wished for was right and good for him.

Steelpacha[*]

ONCE upon a time there was an Emperor who had three sons and three daughters. As he was very old, his last hour drew nigh. He therefore called his children to his bedside and laid earnest command upon his sons to give their sisters, without hesitation, to the first suitors who asked for them in marriage. "Marry them off," he said to the sons, "or my curse will be upon you!" These were his last words.

After his death, day passed quietly after day for a while. Then one evening there came a loud knocking at the door. The whole palace began to rock amid a wild roaring, howling, crashing; the castle was bathed in a sea of flame. Every heart was terrified, and trembling took possession of every soul.

Suddenly a voice cried, "Open the door, ye princes!"

Up spoke the Emperor's eldest son, "Do not open!" And the second said, "On no account open!" But the youngest said, "Then I will open the door myself."

He sprang up and drew the bolts. Hardly was the door opened when a fearful Being rushed in, the outline of whose form was hidden in encircling flames.

"I am come," he exclaimed, "to take your eldest sister for my wife, and that at once. So give a short answer — yes or no; I insist upon it!"

Said the eldest brother, "I will not give her to you. Why should I, when I know neither who nor whence you are? You come here by night, demand my sister's hand upon the instant, and I do not even hear which way I am to turn when I wish to visit her."

Said the second brother, "Nor do I permit you to take away my sister thus in the dead of night."

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[*] From "The Russian Grandmother's Wonder Tales," copyright, 1906, by Charle Scribner's Sons.

But the youngest interposed, "Then I will give her away if you two refuse. Have you already forgotten our father's command?" And taking his sister by the hand he gave her to the stranger, saying, "May she live happily with you and be ever faithful!"

As the sister crossed the threshold every one in the building fell to the ground in fear and horror. It lightened, it thundered, it crashed, it quaked, the whole fortress swayed heavily, as if heaven and earth were falling together. Gradually the uproar died away, and the rosy eastern light announced the coming morning.

As soon as day had broken the brothers searched for the traces which they supposed would have been left by their tremendous nocturnal visitor; but not a trace, not a footprint had he left behind. All was swept away.

On the following night, at the selfsame hour, the selfsame flashing, crashing din was heard around the imperial fortress, and a voice without cried loudly, "Open the door, you princes!"

Paralyzed with terror, they threw open the door and a fearful Form rushed in, crying in a loud voice, "Give me here the maiden, your second sister! I have come to marry her!"

Said the eldest brother, "I will not give you my sister!"

Said the second, "I will not let my sister ——"

But the youngest broke in with, "Then I will! Will you never remember what our father commanded?"

He took his sister by the hand and led her to the wooer. "Take her; she will be happy with you and always good."

At this the powerful apparition vanished, and the maiden with him.

As soon as morning dawned the brothers sought around the castle for traces of the direction which the apparition had taken; but they found nothing under the blessed sun, nor was there the slightest clue from which they could make any sort of guess any more than if no one had been there!

On the third night, at the same hour, the whole castle was again shaken to the foundation by a horrible uproar and earthquake, and a voice called out, "Open the door, ye princes!"

The Emperor's sons sprang nimbly to their feet and drew the bolts, upon which a monstrous Form entered, exclaiming; "We are come to demand the hand of your youngest sister!"

"Never!" shrieked the eldest and second brothers with one voice. "We will not let this one go away thus by night. Surely we must at least know of this our youngest sister whom she marries and where she goes, that we may be able to visit her!"

But up spoke the youngest brother, "Then I will give her away if you refuse. Have you quite forgotten what our father charged us on his dying bed? It is not so long ago."

He took the sister by the hand and said, "Here she is; take her home and live happily and joyfully with her!"

In a twinkling the terrible Being disappeared in the midst of a fearful uproar.

When the morning dawned the brothers felt oppressed by anxiety, being all uncertain as to the fate of their sisters. After a long interval, during which no light had been thrown upon this matter, the three brothers took counsel together:

"Good heavens, did ever one know of anything so mysterious? What has become of our sisters? We have not the least idea of their abiding-place, nor any clue which can lead to their discovery."

At length one said to the others, "Let us go forth to seek our sisters."

So the three brothers made ready without losing a moment. They took money enough for a long journey and went out into the wide world to seek their sisters.

In the course of their wanderings they lost their way among the mountains, where they wandered for a whole day. When night fell they decided, on account of their horses, to encamp near a piece of water.

And so they did. They reached the shore of a lake, pitched their tents, and sat down to supper. When they lay down to sleep the eldest brother said, "You may sleep, but I will stand guard."

So the two younger brothers went peacefully to sleep, while the eldest brother kept watch. At a certain hour of the night the lake became agitated with a swaying motion which startled the watcher not a little. He soon observed a shapeless form arising out of the midst of the water and rushing straight toward him. It was a frightful monster of a Dragon, with two great flapping ears, which was rushing so fiercely upon him. The Prince bravely drew his sword, and seizing the Dragon, cut off his head. Then he sliced off the ears and put them into his wallet, and threw the head and the body back into the lake.

Meantime the day had dawned, and the brothers still lay in profound slumber, little dreaming of their eldest brother's heroic exploit. He now waked them, but said not a syllable about his nocturnal adventure. They left that place and continued their journey, and when twilight began to fall they once more agreed to seek a halting-place near some piece of water. But they were much terrified to find themselves quite lost in a lonely wilderness. At last, however, they came upon a tiny lake, where they decided to spend the night. They kindled a fire, unpacked cooking utensils and food, and took their evening meal. After that they disposed themselves to sleep. Then said the second brother, "Do you two go to rest; I will mount guard to-nignt."

The two brothers therefore lay down to sleep, but the third cheerfully sat up and kept watch. Suddenly a rustling sound from the lake met his ears, and he saw a sight which curdled the blood in his veins. A two-headed Dragon rushed tumultuously upon the brothers as if to annihilate them all three.

Quick as thought the watcher sprang up, drew his glittering sword, avoided the Dragon's attack, and cut off his two heads. Then he sliced off the ears and put them into his wallet, throwing the other parts of the monster back into the lake. The brothers knew nothing of the affair, for both slept soundly until dawn.

When day broke the second brother called to them, "Wake up, brothers, the morning dawns!"

Immediately they sprang up, packed their goods, and set forth upon their way; but they had not the least idea where they were or in what country.

A great fear overwhelmed them that they might perish of hunger in this wilderness, and they besought God to guide them at least to some inhabited village or city, or to permit them to meet some human being, for they had already wandered three days in this inhospitable wilderness without coming to the end or finding any way out.

It was rather early in the day when they came to a pretty large lake and decided to go no farther, but to make their camp on this lake-side. For they said, "If we go farther we shall very probably not find any more water near which to make our camp."

They remained, therefore, in this place, built a great fire, supped, and made ready to sleep. Then said the youngest brother.

"Do you two go to rest. I will take the watch to-night."

So the two lay down and soon fell asleep, but the youngest brother kept a sharp lookout, and often threw a glance over the shining surface of the lake.

Thus passed away a portion of the night, when suddenly the lake boiled up, surged, foaming, upon the fire and half-extinguished it. But the watcher whipped out his sword and took his position close to the fire. Suddenly a three-headed Dragon rushed forth and made as if to kill the brothers.

Now was the hero-spirit of the youth tested. He waked not his brothers, but went forth alone to meet the Dragon. Three times he raised his sword, and each time he smote off one of the monster's heads. Then he sliced off the ears, and threw the shapeless remains into the water.

While this tremendous conflict was going on the fire died out, having been flooded by the water. The Prince would not waken his brothers, although he had no tinder-box of his own to rekindle the flame, but resolved to search around a little in the wilderness in hope of stumbling upon some one who could help him.

But nowhere was there a mortal soul! At last he climbed into a high tree and looked around in all directions to see what he might see.

As he was thus gazing far and wide his eyes were suddenly attracted by a flash of light which seemed to be very near him.

He descended the tree and went in the direction of the light, hoping to get some fire wherewith to rekindle the fire for his brothers.

He went on for a long stretch, the light seeming always to be just before him, when suddenly he found himself standing before a cave in a rock in which nine Giants, gathered around an immense fire, were roasting two men upon a spit, one on one side of the fire, the other on the other. An enormous copper caldron, full to the brim with human flesh, was bubbling over the fire.

The imperial Prince was horrified at this sight. He would have turned back, but whither should he go? Where was there a way of escape for him? He quickly recovered his self-possession, however, and cried out, "Good-morning, valiant comrades, I have long been seeking you!"

They received him most cordially, answering, "God be with thee, if thou art a true comrade."

He replied, "Indeed I am, and shall be all my life long. I would risk my head for you."

"All right," they answered. "If you wish to be one of us, are you ready to eat human flesh and take a share in our adventures?"

"Yes, that I will," said the Prince. "What you do, that will I do also."

"Faith, then all is well!" they said. "Sit down among us."

They settled themselves around the fire. The caldron was taken off, its contents served, and the meal began. The Prince received his share, but he knew how to manage, and, instead of eating, he slyly threw the meat, bit by bit, behind him. He did the same with the roast. Then the Giants said:

"Come, now, we must go a-hunting, for we must eat to-morrow as well as to-day."

So the nine Giants set out, with the Prince for a tenth.

"Come," they said to him, "not far from here is a town in which reigns an Emperor. His city has fed us for several years."

As they drew near to the city they pulled up two fir-trees by the roots and carried them along. When they reached the town they set one of the trees against the wall and called to the Prince, "Come on, climb up the wall here, and we will hand you the second tree. Seize it by the point and let it down on the other side, but keep hold of the top so that we may climb down by the trunk."

The Prince accordingly scrambled up, but on receiving the second tree he called out, "I don't know where to stand it; I am not familiar with the place and dare not shove it over. Do one of you come up and show me, and then I will make it all right."

One of the Giants climbed up to him, seized the fir-tree by the point, and let it down on the other side of the wall. As he stood thus bent over, the Prince drew his sword and struck off his head, and the dead Giant tumbled off the wall into the city.

Then the Prince cried to the others, "All right! Come on now, one at a time, that I may help you along in the same way."

One after another unsuspiciously climbed up, only to meet death at the hand of the Prince. When he had made an end of all the nine he let himself down by the fir-tree into the city, which he explored in every direction. No sound of human voice reached his ear. All was a drear, horrible desolation. "Has the whole population been robbed and murdered by the Giants?" he thought to himself.

For a long time he wandered about the desolate city, until he came to a very high tower, from one window of which shone out the light of a taper. He threw open the door, rushed up the tower stair, and hastened straight to that room.

On the threshold he stood still in amazement. The room was richly hung and decorated with gold, silk, and velvet, and not a soul within except a maiden who lay upon a couch, outstretched in deep slumber. The Prince was rooted to the spot at the sight of the maiden, for she was wonderfully beautiful. But at that moment he became aware of a great serpent which, sliding along the wall, stretched out its head directly over the head of the maiden, coiling itself up in readiness to spring and strike her upon the brow, between the eyes.

Then the Prince sprang quickly with his pocket-knife, which in a trice he had drawn from his pocket, and pinned the serpent's head to the wall. Then saying these words: "God grant that no hand but mine may draw this knife out from the wall," he went quickly away. He climbed up by one fir-tree and down by the other, and so got over the wall. Arrived at the Giants' cave, he took some fire and ran back to his brothers, who were still buried in profound slumber. As he kindled the fire day began to dawn in the east. He wakened the brothers, and they set forth upon their journey.

That same day they came to the highway leading to the before-mentioned city. A mighty Emperor reigned there who used to go about the city every morning shedding bitter tears because his people were exterminated and eaten by the Giants, and because of his constant fear that his only daughter would fall a sacrifice to their gluttony. On this morning he was going about the city as usual. It lay empty and deserted; the inhabitants had dwindled away to a mere remnant; most of them had found a grave in the giants' maws.

As I have said, the Emperor was thus reviewing his city when suddenly his eyes fell upon the uprooted fir-tree which still leaned against the wall, and as he drew nearer he beheld a wonderful sight; there lay the nine Giants, the very pests of the city, with their heads all cut off!

This sight gave the King unspeakable joy. The people also gathered together to pray God that blessing and happiness might descend upon the giant-slayer. At that very moment a servant came from the imperial citadel to say that a serpent had nearly been the death of the Emperor's daughter. Upon this the Emperor betook himself straightway to the citadel, and to the very chamber of his daughter. Arrived there, he saw upon the wall the impaled serpent, and tried with his own hand to draw out the knife, but in vain.

Then the Emperor sent a proclamation through his whole empire: "Whoever has slain the Giants and impaled the serpent, let him make himself known, that the Emperor may richly reward him and bestow upon him the hand of his daughter."

This proclamation was issued in every province of the empire. The Emperor also gave command that great inns should be erected upon the principal highways, where all travellers should be stopped and asked whether they knew who had overcome the giants; and whoever should discover the man, let him hasten with utmost speed to the Emperor to receive a rich reward.

According to the imperial proclamation, great inns were erected upon the principal highways, and every traveller was stopped, examined, and the whole affair explained to him.

After a while the three Princes who were seeking their sisters came to pass the night at one of these inns. After supper the landlord joined the company, and began to boast of his wonderful exploits. At last he turned to the three brothers with the question, "And what doughty deeds have you done up to this time?"

Then the eldest brother began, "As I and my brothers were upon our travels it came to pass one night that we made our halt on the border of a lake in a great wilderness. While my brothers were asleep and I keeping watch, a Dragon came up out of the lake to destroy me. I drew my sword out of the scabbard and struck off his head. If you don't believe me, here are his ears." And he drew the ears out of his wallet and threw them upon the table.

When the second brother heard this, he began, "I had the watch on the second night, and I killed a two-headed Dragon. If you don't believe me, here are the ears which I cut from his two heads for a witness." He said it and showed the two pairs of ears.

The youngest brother heard the whole in silence. The landlord now turned to him.

"By heaven, youngster, your brothers are valiant heroes! Come let us hear if you can also boast of any doughty deeds!"

Hesitatingly the youngest began his story: "Well, I also did a trifle. It was on the third night, beside the lake in the wilderness. You, my brothers, were asleep. I kept watch. At a certain hour of the night the lake surged up and a three-headed Dragon arose from it, who would have annihilated us.

Then I drew a sword and cut off all three of his heads. If you don't believe it, here are the three pairs of ears!"

Upon this the two brothers were dumb with astonishment. But the youngest went on with his story: "In the meantime the fire had gone out, and I went forth to seek a light. While straying around among the hills I stumbled upon nine giants in a cave"; and so he went on and told all his adventures in order, and every one was struck with amazement at the wonderful tale.

No sooner had the landlord heard the story than he ran secretly to the Emperor and told him the whole affair. The Emperor gave him a great sum of money, and sent his people at once to bring the three princes before him.

When they came into the Emperor's presence he put the following question to the youngest: "Is it you who performed the wonders in our city, killing the Giants and saving my only daughter from destruction?"

"Yes, it was I, mighty Emperor," replied the Prince. Hereupon the Emperor married his daughter to the young Prince and raised him to the highest office in the kingdom.

Then the Emperor said to the two elder brothers, "If it please you to remain in my empire, I will give you each a wife and will permit you to build strongholds for yourselves."

But they told him they were already married, and explained that they had undertaken this journey merely to seek out their sisters. When the Emperor heard this he detained only the youngest brother, his son-in-law, and to the two other brothers he gave two mules laden with gold. So the two brothers returned home to their own kingdom.

Still the youngest brother thought continually of his sisters, and kept always in mind the hope of yet seeking them out. But on the other hand he was pained at the thought of parting from his young wife, and besides he knew that the Emperor would never consent to his leaving him. So he was continually racked with anxiety about his sisters.

One day the Emperor went hunting, and before setting out he said to his son-in-law, "Do you remain in the castle during my absence. I give to you nine keys which you must keep carefully by you. I give you free leave to open three or four rooms. You will find in them silver and gold in abundance; there is also no lack of weapons, or of any kind of treasure. You may even, if you feel inclined, open eight of the rooms. But beware of unlocking the ninth. Leave that one alone; for," he added, "if you do not it will be the worse for you." Upon this the Emperor departed, leaving his son-in-law at home alone.

Hardly was the Emperor gone when the Prince began to open one door after another, until he had examined eight rooms in succession. His eyes beheld in them treasures of all kinds. When at last he came to the door of the ninth room he said to himself, "I have seen and done so many wonderful things, and shall it be forbidden me to enter a certain room?"

So he unlocked the door and went in. What a sight! There was a man whose legs up to his knees and whose arms up to the elbows were incased in iron; from his neck hung heavy iron chains, the ends of which were fastened to stakes driven into the floor on all sides, holding him so securely that he could not stir. Before him a stream of water gushed from a golden vessel and flowed into a golden basin which stood near; beside it was a golden jug, beautifully adorned with jewels. The man longed to drink the water, but he could not reach the jug.

When the imperial Prince saw this he started backward; but the fettered man cried, "Oh, come to me, I beseech you, in the name of the living God!"

The Prince drew nearer, and the man continued, "Oh, do a pious act; let me drain a jug of water! Be assured I will reward you for it with an additional life."

The Prince considered the proposition. "Can there be anything better for me than to secure for myself an additional life?" He took the jug, filled it, and raised it to the man's lips, who emptied it at a single draught. Upon this the Prince asked him, "In the name of heaven, who are you?"

The man answered, "My name is Steelpacha."

The prince now turned toward the door, but the man implored him, "Give me another jug of water, and I will give you a second life."

The Prince thought, "He will give me a second life, I have one into the bargain. This will be a prodigy indeed!" and he filled the jug again and put it to the man's lips.

He then turned away and already held the door-latch in his hand when Steelpacha called to him, "Oh, sir, come back to me! You have twice acted nobly by me; prove yourself a man a third time and I will give you a third life. Take this jug, fill it to the brim, and pour it over my head; and for this labour of love I will give you a third life."

When the Prince heard this he turned back, took the jug, filled it with water, and poured it over the man's head. The moment the water touched him the chains about his neck fell asunder and all the bonds which held him were unloosed. Quick as lightning Steelpacha sprang up, spread a pair of wings, flew out of the window, snatched up the Princess, the wife of his deliverer, took flight with her under his wing, and in a moment had disappeared from view. That was a prodigy indeed!

The Prince now looked forward with deepest dread to the Emperor's return. However, when the Emperor came home, the Prince told the whole story exactly as it had happened. The Emperor was beside himself with grief. "Why did you do thus?" said he reproachfully. "Did I not expressly forbid you to enter the ninth room?"

The Prince answered soothingly, "Don't be angry with me. I will go at once to seek Steelpacha and rescue my wife from him."

The Emperor tried to dissuade him from this plan. "Don't do that," said he; "you shall on no account move a step from this place. You have no idea who Steelpacha is. Many an army and much treasure did I waste before I got him in my power. So remain quietly with me. I will provide another wife for you. And don't be unhappy; I love you as my own son."

But the Prince was deaf to all these persuasions, and adhered to his first resolution. He provided himself with the necessary money, mounted his horse, and went forth into the world to seek Steelpacha. For a long time he wandered about, and at last he arrived at a city. He was gazing around with some curiosity, when suddenly a woman called to him from a balcony, "You Prince, get down from your horse and come into the court!"

As the Prince entered the court the woman came to meet him. He looked narrowly at her and recognized his eldest sister. They flew into each other's arms and lavished sweet kisses upon each other.

The sister was the first to speak. "Come out upon the balcony with me, brother."

When they were upon the balcony the Prince asked his sister whom she had married, and she answered, "I am married to the Emperor of the Dragons. My husband is himself a Dragon. So, brother, it would be worth your while to hide, for my husband often says he would cut his brothers-in-law in small bits if he ever laid eyes upon them. Let me first question him; if he promises to do you no harm I will tell him of your arrival."

So said and so done. The sister concealed her brother and his horse. The evening drew on. The Dragon's supper was ready; they were awaiting his arrival, when at last he came. When he flew in the whole earth was bathed in blinding light; but he had hardly entered when he called to his wife:

"Wife, I smell men's bones. Who is here? Tell me quick!"

"No one is here," she answered.

"That is not possible," said he.

Upon this the wife said, "I want to ask you a question, and do you answer me truly and honestly. Would you do any harm to my brothers if they happened to come here?"

The Dragon-emperor answered, "I would have the eldest and the second killed and roasted, but I would do nothing to the youngest."

Upon this she said, "My youngest brother, your brother-in-law, is arrived."

When the Dragon-emperor heard this he cried, "Out with him, then!" And when the sister brought her brother from his hiding-place the Emperor ran to meet him and showered kisses upon him.

"Welcome here, brother-in-law!"

"God be with you, sister's husband!"

"Where were you hiding?"

"Here I am!" And he told him the object of his journey, from beginning to end.

The Dragon-emperor said to him, "You are running the greatest risk, God help you! The day before yesterday Steelpacha flew past with your wife. I was awaiting him with seven thousand dragons, but we could not overcome him. I adjure you, let that fiend alone. I will give you money to your heart's desire; just go quietly home."

But the Prince would not hear a word of this advice, and emphatically declared that he would continue his journey on the morrow. When the Emperor saw that he could not prevent him, nor induce him to turn back, he drew a feather out of his wing and gave it to his brother-in-law, with these words:

"Give good heed to what I now tell you. Take this feather of mine, and if you come across Steelpacha and find yourself in great danger, then burn my feather; that very moment I will come to your aid with the whole strength of my army."

The Prince concealed the feather in a safe place and went his way. He travelled on and on until he reached a second great city. Here again, as he was going through the city, a woman called to him from a balcony.

"Ho, there, you Prince, dismount from your horse and come into the court!"

The Prince rode into the court. Behold, who comes to meet him? It is his second sister! They rush into each other's arms and kiss each other heartily. Then the sister led her brother into the castle.

When she had put the horse into the stable she asked the object of his journey, and he told her the whole story of his adventures, finally asking her, "And whom have you married, dear sister?"

She answered, "I am married to the Emperor of the Falcons. He will come home to-night. But I must carefully conceal you, for he is furious against my brothers." So saying, she concealed the Prince.

In a little while the Falcon-emperor came home, and the whole city quaked with the tumult of his approach. Supper was served at once, but not before he had cried to his wife, "I smell men's flesh!"

The wife answered, "What are you thinking of, husband?"

At last, after talking for some time of this thing and that, she asked him, "Would you do any harm to my brothers if they were to come here?"

The Emperor said, "It would surely go hard with the eldest and the second, but I would do nothing to the youngest." Then she told him of her youngest brother's arrival.

The Falcon-emperor commanded his wife to bring her brother before him, and as soon as he beheld him he fell upon his neck and kissed him. "Welcome, dear brother-in-law!"

"A lucky and joyful meeting, dear sister's husband!" answered the Prince; upon which they sat down to supper.

After supper the Emperor asked his brother-in-law concerning the object of his journey, and the Prince replied that he was seeking Steelpacha, and told him all his adventures. But the Emperor began to counsel him.

"Give up your journey," said he. "Just let me tell you something about Steelpacha. That very day on which he stole your wife I was awaiting him with five thousand falcons, and waged a fearful battle with him. Blood flowed knee-deep around us, yet we could not prevail against him. And how shall you, a single man, overmaster him? So I give you this well-meant advice: Go back home. So much of my treasure as your heart desires is yours; take it and go."

But the Prince answered, "Hearty thanks for your offer, but go back with my task unperformed I will not. No, never! I must yet find Steelpacha." For he thought to himself, "Why should I not? Have I not three lives?"

When the Falcon-emperor became convinced that he could not move him from his purpose he drew a feather out of his wing and gave it to him, with these words, "Here, take this feather of mine, and if you come into great danger strike a fire and burn it. I will come at once to your aid with all my forces."

So the Prince took the feather and set forth to seek Steelpacha.

For a long time he went up and down through the wide world, until at last he reached a third city. He had hardly entered it when a woman called to him from a balcony, "Dismount and come into the court!"

The Prince turned his horse and rode into the court. Behold, there was his youngest sister! They fell into each other's arms and lavished kisses upon each other. She led the horse into the stable, the brother into the castle. Then the Prince asked, "Sister, whom have you married?"

And she answered, "My consort is the Emperor of the Eagles; it is he whom I have married."

When the Eagle-emperor came home that night his wife met him affectionately; but he paid no attention to her greeting, but asked her, "What man has come into my castle? Tell me at once!"

She answered, "There is no one here," and they sat down to supper. During supper she asked him, as if by chance, "Would you do any harm to my brothers if they should suddenly arrive?"

The Emperor answered, "The eldest and the second I should kill without hesitation, but not the youngest. On the contrary, I would hasten to his aid at any time, as far as it was in my power."

Then she said to the Emperor, "My youngest brother is come to pay us a visit."

The Emperor commanded that he should be presented at once, went to meet him and greeted him with "Welcome, dear brother-in-law!"

The other answered, "A lucky and joyful meeting, dear sister's husband!"

So they sat down to the table.

After supper they talked of one thing and another, and at last the Prince told them that he was seeking for Steelpacha. When the Eagle-emperor heard this he said everything he could think of to dissuade him from this idea.

"Dear brother-in-law," said he, "leave that fiend alone and give up your journey. Stay, rather, here with me; you shall be made happy in every respect."

But the Prince paid no heed to his words, and as soon as morning dawned he made ready and set off to seek Steelpacha. But before he went away the Eagle-emperor, who saw that he could not turn him from his purpose, drew forth a feather from his wing and said:

"Take this feather, brother-in-law, and if ever you are in need or danger, strike a fire and burn it. I will come at once with my eagles to help you."

The Prince put the feather in his pocket and set forth.

Thus he roved around the world from city to city, going ever farther and farther till at last one day he discovered his wife in a cavern. She was not a little surprised to see him, and cried out to him, "In the name of heaven, husband, how came you here?"

He hastily told her his adventures, and added, "Wife, my wife! Quick, let us flee!"

But she hesitated. "Where shall we go, since Steelpacha can overtake us in a moment? He will kill you on the spot, and bring me back here again."

But the Prince, being mindful of the three lives which Steelpacha had given him, still coaxed his wife to flee, and they set out. Hardly had they started when Steelpacha heard of it, gave rapid chase, and overtook them.

"Oho, little Prince!" he cried out, "you would steal my wife, would you?"

He tore her away from the Prince, and continued, "This time I give you your life, for I have not forgotten that I promised you three lives; but go now, and never come back again after her, for if you do your life is at stake."

With these words Steelpacha took the woman away, while the Prince remained alone, in doubt what to do next. At last he resolved to go after his wife again.

When he arrived near the cavern he waited for his opportunity till Steelpacha should be gone away; and once more he fled, taking his wife with him.

Steelpacha soon heard of it, pursued after them, overtook them, fitted an arrow to his bow, and cried out, "Would you rather that I kill you with this arrow, or shall I cut you down with my sword?"

The Prince began to beg with all his might, and Steelpacha said to him, "This second time I give you your life, but let me tell you one thing: don't you try again to carry away this woman, for I will not again give you your life, but will kill you on the spot as dead as a mouse."

With these words he seized the woman and carried her away, while the Prince again remained alone, always planning how to rescue his wife. Finally he said to himself, "After all, why should I be afraid? I still have two lives — that one which he gave me and the one I had before."

So he resolved to go back to his wife the next day when Steelpacha was absent.

"Come," he said to her, "let us flee!" She objected that it was useless to flee, since they would be at once overtaken; but he constrained her to go with him.

But very soon Steelpacha overtook them, and cried out to the Prince, "Wait, just wait! I will never forgive you this!" The Prince was terrified and began to beg for mercy, but Steelpacha silenced him.

"You remember that I gave you three lives? All right; now I give you the third, and you have nothing more to expect from me. So go home in peace, and beware of hazarding the life which God lent you."

When the Prince saw that he was powerless against the might of Steelpacha he turned back homeward with a heavy heart. Suddenly he remembered what his brothers-in-law had said to him when they gave him the feathers, and he said to himself, "Come what come may, I will go once more to rescue my wife, and in case of need I will burn the feathers and call my brothers-in-law to my assistance."

So said and so done.

He went back to the cavern and saw his wife in Steelpacha's arms. He waited around till the latter had gone away, and then showed himself to his wife. She was not a little frightened, and cried out in terror, "In the name of heaven! Is life so hateful that you come back again for me?"

He calmed her and told her that his brothers-in-law had promised to help him in utmost need. "And therefore," said he, "I am come for you once more; make ready to flee."

She did so, and they hastened away; but Steelpacha soon got news of their flight, and cried to them from afar, "Just wait, little Prince; you have n't escaped me yet!"

But as soon as the Prince saw Steelpacha he drew the three feathers and his tinder-box out of his pocket, struck a light, and kindled the feathers one by one. But while they were kindling Steelpacha overtook him, drew his sword, and cleft the Prince in half.

That very moment what a prodigy occurred! There came flying the Dragon-emperor with his dragons, the Falcon-emperor with his falcons, and the Eagle-emperor with all his eagles, and waged battle with Steelpacha. Blood flowed in streams, but fortune favoured Steelpacha, and he made off safely, carrying his prize, the Princess, with him.

The three emperors now took counsel over their brother-in-law's body, and decided to recall him to life. So they summoned three of the swiftest dragons and asked which one of them could most speedily bring some water from the river Jordan. The first one said, "I can do it within half an hour;" the second said, "I can do it in a quarter of an hour;" the third said, "I will have it here in nine minutes." The emperors said to this one, "Then set out, Dragon, as fast as possible."

The Dragon put forth all his impetuous strength, and truly within nine minutes he brought back the water from the Jordan. The emperors took the water, poured it over the two portions of the Prince's body and scarcely had the water touched them when the young man sprang upon his feet, safe and sound, as if nothing had happened to him.

The emperors then counselled him, "Now go back home, since you have been restored to life!"

But the Prince answered that he must once more try his luck, and, by one means or another, free his wife from the clutches of that fiend. His imperial brothers-in-law remonstrated:

"Do give it up! You will surely perish this time, for you have no life at command except the one God lent you!"

But for all answer the Prince remained dumb.

Then the emperors said, "All right; if you are bent upon trying again, come what come may, at least don't attempt to get your wife away by flight, but beg her to wheedle Steelpacha into telling her wherein his strength lies. Then bring us word, that we may help you to get the best of him."

So the Prince stole secretly to his wife and told her how she should coax Steelpacha to tell her the secret of his strength. Then he betook himself to some place of safety.

When Steelpacha came home the Princess beset him with questions. "In heaven's name, do tell me wherein your strength lies!"

Steelpacha answered, "My pretty wife, my strength lies in my sword."

Then the Princess prayed to the sword as if to God. At sight of this Steelpacha burst into a mocking laugh and said to her, "Oh, you simple woman! my strength lies not in my sword but in my arrow."

Therefore she fell upon her knees before the arrow and began to pray to it. Then Steelpacha said, "My wife, some one must have well taught you how to coax from me the secret of my strength. If your husband were alive I should say it was he who had taught you."

But she swore by body and soul that no one had taught her, no one had been there.

After several days her husband came again, and she told him that thus far it had been impossible to learn from Steelpacha wherein his strength lay. But the Prince answered, "Try again," and went away.

When Steelpacha came home she asked him anew wherein his strength lay. Upon which he answered her, "Since I see that you have a high respect for my strength, I will confess the truth about it."

Then he told her: "Far from here is a mountain-peak. On this mountain-peak lives a Fox. The Fox has a heart in which a bird is concealed; this bird holds my strength. But that Fox is very hard to catch, for he has many transformations."

The next day, when Steelpacha was away from home, the Prince came again to his wife to learn what he had told her. She repeated everything carefully, and the Prince went straight away to his brothers-in-law with the much-longed-for news. They received it with joy, and at once set out with the Prince to go to that mountain-peak.

Arrived there, they set the eagles upon the Fox, which immediately took refuge in a lake and there changed himself into a gull with six wings. But the falcons gave battle to the gull and drove him thence. He flew high amid the clouds, the falcons ever following. In a trice the gull changed himself into a fox again and tried to escape into the earth; but, falling into the power of the eagles and all the rest of the mighty host, he was surrounded and taken prisoner.

Then the emperors commanded that the Fox should be cut open and his heart taken out. A fire was kindled, the heart cut open, and the bird taken out and cast into the flames. As soon as the bird was burned Steelpacha vanished forever.

So the Prince took his wife and went happily home.

The Buried Moon

LONG ago in my grandmother's time, the Carland was all in bogs, great pools of black water, and creeping trickles of green water, and squishy mools which squirted when you stepped on them.

Well, granny used to say how long before her time the Moon herself was once dead and buried in the marshes, and as she used to tell me, I'll tell you all about it.

The Moon up yonder shone and shone just as she does now, and when she shone she lighted up the bogpools, so that one could walk about almost as safe as in the day.

But when she didn't shine, out came the Things that dwelt in the darkness and went about seeking to do evil and harm; Bogles and Crawling Horrors, all came out when the Moon didn't shine.

Well, the Moon heard of this, and being kind and good—as she surely is, shining for us in the night instead of taking her natural rest—she was main troubled. "I'll see for myself, I will," said she, "maybe it's not so bad as folks make out."

Sure enough, at the month's end down she stepped, wrapped up in a black cloak, and a black hood over her yellow shining hair. Straight she went to the bog edge and looked about her. Water here and water there; waving tussocks and trembling mools, and great black snags all twisted and bent. Before her all was dark—dark but for the glimmer of the stars in the pools, and the light that came from her own white feet, stealing out of her black cloak.

The Moon drew her cloak faster about her and trembled, but she wouldn't go back without seeing all there was to be seen; so on she went, stepping as light as the wind in summer from tuft to tuft between the muddy, gurgling water holes. Just as she came near a big black pool her foot slipped and she was nigh tumbling in. She grabbed with both hands at a snag near by, to steady herself with, but as she touched it, it twined itself round her wrists, like a pair of handcuffs, and gripped her so that she could n't move. She pulled and twisted and fought, but it was no good. She was fast, and must stay fast.

Presently as she stood trembling in the dark, wondering if help would come, she heard something calling in the distance, calling, calling, and then dying away with a sob, till the marshes were full of this pitiful crying sound; then she heard steps floundering along, squishing in the mud and slipping on the tufts, and through the darkness she saw a white face with great feared eyes.

'T was a man strayed in the bogs. Mazed with fear he struggled on toward the flickering light that looked like help and safety. And when the poor Moon saw that he was coming nigher and nigher to the deep hole, farther and farther from the path, she was so mad and so sorry that she struggled and fought and pulled harder than ever. And though she could n't get loose she twisted and turned, till her black hood fell back off her shining yellow hair, and the beautiful light that came from it drove away the darkness.

Oh, but the man cried with joy to see the light again. And at once all evil things fled back into the dark corners, for they cannot abide the light. So he could see where he was, and where the path was, and how he could get out of the marsh. And he was in such haste to get away from the Quicks, and Bogles, and Things that dwelt there, that he scarce looked at the brave light that came from the beautiful shining yellow hair, streaming out over the black cloak and falling to the water at his feet. And the Moon herself was so taken up with saving him, and with rejoicing that he was back on the right path, that she clean forgot that she needed help herself, and that she was held fast by the Black Snag.

So off he went, spent and gasping, and stumbling and sobbing with joy, flying for his life out of the terrible bogs. Then it came over the Moon, she would main like to go with him.

So she pulled and fought as if she were mad, till she fell on her knees, spent with tugging, at the foot of the snag. And as she lay there, gasping for breath, the black hood fell forward over her head. So out went the blessed light and back came the darkness, with all its Evil Things, with a screech and a howl. They came crowding round her, mocking and snatching and beating; shrieking with rage and spite, and swearing and snarling, for they knew her for their old enemy, that drove them back into the corners, and kept them from working their wicked wills.

"Drat thee!" yelled the witch-bodies, "thou 'st spoiled our spells this year agone!"

"And us thou sent'st to brood in the corners!" howled the Bogles.

And all the Things joined in with a great "Ho, ho!" till the very tussocks shook and the water gurgled. And they began again.

"We 'll poison her — poison her!" shrieked the witches.

And "Ho, ho!" howled the Things again.

"We 'll smother her — smother her!" whispered the Crawling Horrors, and twined themselves round her knees.

And "Ho, ho!" mocked the rest of them.

And again they all shouted with spite and ill-will. And the poor Moon crouched down, and wished she was dead and done with.

And they fought and squabbled what they should do with her, till a pale gray light began to come in the sky; and it drew nigh the dawning. And when they saw that, they were feared lest they should n't have time to work their will; and they caught hold of her, with horrid bony fingers, and laid her deep in the water at the foot of the snag. And the Bogles fetched a strange big stone and rolled it on top of her, to keep her from rising. And they told two of the Will-o-the-wykes to take turns in watching on the black snag, to see that she lay safe and still, and could n't get out to spoil their sport.

And there lay the poor Moon, dead and buried in the bog, till some one would set her loose; and who 'd know where to look for her?

Well, the days passed, and 't was the time for the new moon's coming, and the folk put pennies in their pockets and straws in their caps so as to be ready for her, and looked about, for the Moon was a good friend to the marsh folk, and they were main glad when the dark time was gone, and the paths were safe again, and the Evil Things were driven back by the blessed Light into the darkness and the waterholes.

But days and days passed, and the new Moon never came, and the nights were aye dark, and the Evil Things were worse than ever. And still the days went on, and the new Moon never came. Naturally the poor folk were strangely feared and mazed, and a lot of them went to the Wise Woman who dwelt in the old mill, and asked if so be she could find out where the Moon was gone.

"Well," said she, after looking in the brewpot, and in the mirror, and in the Book, "it be main queer, but I can't rightly tell ye what 's happened to her. If ye hear aught, come and tell me."

So they went their ways; and as days went by, and never a Moon came, naturally they talked — my word! I reckon they *did* talk! their tongues wagged at home, and at the inn, and in the garth. But so came one day, as they sat on the great settle in the Inn, a man from the far end of the bog lands was smoking and listening, when all at once he sat up and slapped his knee. "My faicks!" said he, "I 'd clean forgot, but I reckon I kens where the Moon be!" and he told them of how he was lost in the bogs, and how, when he was nigh dead with fright, the light shone out, and he found the path and got home safe.

So off they all went to the Wise Woman, and told her about it, and she looked long in the pot and the Book again, and then she nodded her head.

"It 's dark still, childer, dark!" says she, "and I can't rightly see, but do as I tell ye, and ye 'll find out for yourselves. Go, all of ye, just afore the night gathers, put a stone in your mouth, and take a hazel-twig in your hands, and say never a word till you 're safe home again. Then walk on and fear not, far into the midst of the marsh, till ye find a coffin, a candle, and a cross.

Then ye 'll not be far from your Moon; look, and m'appen ye 'll find her."

So come the next night in the darklings, out they went all together, every man with a stone in his mouth, and a hazel-twig in his hand, and feeling, thou may 'st reckon, main feared and creepy. And they stumbled and stottered along the paths into the midst of the bogs; they saw naught, though they heard sighings and flutterings in their ears, and felt cold wet fingers touching them; but all together, looking around for the coffin, the candle, and the cross, while they came nigh to the pool beside the great snag, where the Moon lay buried. And all at once they stopped, quaking and mazed and skeery, for there was the great stone, half in, half out of the water, for all the world like a strange big coffin; and at the head was the black snag, stretching out its two arms in a dark gruesome cross, and on it a tiddy light flickered, like a dying candle. And they all knelt down in the mud, and said, "Our Lord," first forward, because of the cross, and then backward, to keep off the Bogles; but without speaking out, for they knew that the Evil Things would catch them, if they did n't do as the Wise Woman told them.

Then they went nigher, and took hold of the big stone, and shoved it up, and afterward they said that for one tiddy minute they saw a strange and beautiful face looking up at them gladlike out of the black water; but the Light came so quick and so white and shining, that they stepped back mazed with it, and the very next minute, when they could see again, there was the full Moon in the sky, bright and beautiful and kind as ever, shining and smiling down at them, and making the bogs and the paths as clear as day, and stealing into the very corners, as though she 'd have driven the darkness and the Bogles clean away if she could.

The Farmer of Liddesdale

THERE was in Liddesdale (in Morven) a Farmer who suffered great loss within the space of one year. In the first place, his wife and children died, and shortly after their death the Ploughman left him. The hiring-markets were then over, and there was no way of getting another Ploughman in the place of the one that left. When spring came his neighbours began ploughing; but he had not a man to hold the plough, and he knew not what he should do. The time was passing, and he was, therefore, losing patience. At last he said to himself, in a fit of passion, that he would engage the first man that came his way, whoever he should be.

Shortly after that a man came to the house. The Farmer met him at the door, and asked him whither was he going, or what was he seeking? He answered that he was a Ploughman, and that he wanted an engagement. "I want a Ploughman, and if we agree about the wages, I will engage thee. What dost thou ask from this day to the day when the crop will be gathered in?"

"Only as much of the corn when it shall be dry as I can carry with me in one burden-withe."

"Thou shalt get that," said the Farmer, and they agreed.

Next morning the Farmer went out with the Ploughman, and showed him the fields which he had to plough. Before they returned, the Ploughman went to the wood, and having cut three stakes, came back with them, and placed one of them at the head of each one of the fields. After he had done that he said to the Farmer, "I will do the work now alone, and the ploughing need no longer give thee anxiety."

Having said this, he went home and remained idle all that day. The next day came, but he remained idle as on the day before. After he had spent a good while in that manner, the Farmer said to him that it was time for him to begin to work now, because the spring was passing away, and the neighbours had half their work finished.

He replied, "Oh, our land is not ready yet."

"How dost thou think that?"

"Oh, I know it by the stakes."

If the delay of the Ploughman made the Farmer wonder, this answer made him wonder more. He resolved that he would keep his eye on him, and see what he was doing.

The Farmer rose early next morning, and saw the Ploughman going to the first field. When he reached the field, he pulled the stake at its end out of the ground, and put it to his nose. He shook his head and put the stake back in the ground. He then left the first field and went to the rest. He tried the stakes, shook his head, and returned home. In the dusk he went out the second time to the fields, tried the stakes, shook his head, and after putting them again in the ground, went home. Next morning he went out to the fields the third time. When he reached the first stake he pulled it out of the ground and put it to his nose as he did on the foregoing days. But no sooner had he done that than he threw the stake from him, and stretched away for the horses with all his might.

He got the horses, the withes, and the plough, and when he reached the end of the first field with them, he thrust the plough into the ground, and cried:

"My horses and my leather-traces, and mettlesome lads,
The earth is coming up!"

He then began ploughing, kept at it all day at a terrible rate and before the sun went down that night there was not a palm-breadth of the three fields which he had not ploughed, sowed, and harrowed. When the Farmer saw this he was exceedingly well pleased, for he had his work finished as soon as his neighbours.

The Ploughman was quick and ready to do everything that he was told, and so he and the Farmer agreed well until the harvest came. But on a certain day when the reaping was over the Farmer said to him that he thought the corn was dry enough for putting in. The Ploughman tried a sheaf or two, and answered that it was not dry yet. But shortly after that day he said that it was now ready. "If it is," said the Farmer, "we'd better begin putting it in."

"We will not until I get my share out of it first," said the Ploughman. He then went off to the wood, and in a short time returned, having in his hand a withe scraped and twisted. He stretched the withe on the field, and began to put the corn in it. He continued putting sheaf after sheaf in the withe until he had taken almost all the sheaves that were on the field. The Farmer asked of him what he meant? "Thou didst promise me as wages as much corn as I could carry with me in one burden-withe, and here I have it now," said the Ploughman, as he was shutting the withe.

The Farmer saw that he would be ruined by the Ploughman, and therefore said:

"'T was in the Mart I sowed,
'T was in the Mart I baked,
'T was in the Mart I harrowed.
Thou Who hast ordained the three Marts,
Let not my share go in one burden-withe."

Instantly the withe broke. and it made a loud report, which echo answered from every rock far and near. Then the corn spread over the field, and the Ploughman went away in a white mist in the skies, and was seen no more.

The Badger's Money

ONCE upon a time, in a hut at a place called Namékata, in Hitache, there lived an old priest, famous neither for learning nor wisdom, but bent only on passing his days in prayer and meditation. He had not even a child to wait upon him, but prepared his food with his own hands. Night and morning he recited the prayer, "Namu Amida Butsu," intent upon that alone. Although the fame of his virtue did not reach far, yet his neighbours respected and revered him, and often brought him food and raiment; and when his roof or his walls fell out of repair, they would mend them for him; so for the things of this world he took no thought.

One very cold night, when he little thought any one was outside, he heard a voice calling, "Your reverence! your reverence!" So he rose and went out to see who it was, and there he beheld an old badger standing. Any ordinary man would have been greatly alarmed at the apparition; but the priest, being such as he has been described above, showed no sign of fear, but asked the creature his business. Upon this the badger respectfully bent its knees, and said:

"Hitherto, sir, my lair has been in the mountains, and of snow or frost I have taken no heed; but now I am growing old, and this severe cold is more that I can bear. I pray you to let me enter and warm myself at the fire of your cottage, that I may live through this bitter night."

When the priest heard what a helpless state the beast was reduced to, he was filled with pity, and said:

"That 's a very slight matter; make haste and come in and warm yourself."

The badger, delighted with so good a reception, went into the hut, and squatting down by the fire began to warm itself; and the priest, with renewed fervour, recited his prayers and struck his bell before the image of Buddha, looking straight before him. After two hours the badger took its leave, with profuse expressions of thanks, and went out; and from that time forth it came every night to the hut. As the badger would collect and bring with it dried branches and dead leaves from the hills for firewood, the priest at last became very friendly with it, and got used to its company; so that if ever, as the night wore on, the badger did not arrive, he used to miss it, and wonder why it did not come. When the winter was over, and the spring-time came at the end of the second month, the badger gave up its visits, and was no more seen; but, on the return of the winter, the beast resumed its old habit of coming to the hut. When this practice had gone on for ten years, one day the badger said to the priest, "Through your reverence's kindness for all these years, I have been able to pass the winter nights in comfort. Your favours are such that, during all my life, and even after my death, I must remember them. What can I do to requite them? If there is anything that you wish for, pray tell me."

The priest, smiling at this speech, answered, "Being such as I am, I have no desire and no wishes. Glad as I am to hear your kind intentions, there is nothing that I can ask you to do for me. You need feel no anxiety on my account. As long as I live, when the winter comes, you shall be welcome here." The badger, on hearing this, could not conceal its admiration at the depth of the old man's benevolence; but having so much to be grateful for, it felt hurt at not being able to requite it. As this subject was often renewed between them, the priest at last, touched by the goodness of the badger's heart, said, "Since I have shaven my head, renounced the world, and forsaken the pleasures of this life, I have no desire to gratify, yet I own I should like to possess three riyos in gold. Food and raiment I receive by the favour of the villagers, so I take no heed for those things. Were I to die to-morrow, and attain my wish of being born again into the next world, the same kind folk have promised to meet and bury my body. Thus, although I have no other reason to wish for money, still if I had three riyos I would offer them up at some holy shrine, that masses and prayers might be said for me, whereby I might enter into salvation. Yet I would not get this money by violent or unlawful means; I only think of what might be if I had it. So you see, since you have expressed such kind feelings toward me, I have told you what is on my mind." When the priest had done speaking, the badger leaned its head on one side with a puzzled and anxious look, so much so that the old man was sorry he had expressed a wish which seemed to give the beast trouble, and tried to retract what he had said. "Posthumous honours, after all, are the wish of ordinary men, I, who am a priest, ought not to entertain such thoughts, or to want money; so pray pay no attention to what I have said;" and the badger, feigning assent to what the priest had impressed upon it, returned to the hills as usual.

From that time forth the badger came no more to the hut. The priest thought this very strange, but imagined either that the badger stayed away because it did not like to come without the money, or that it had been killed in an attempt to steal it; and he blamed himself for having added to his sins for no purpose, repenting when it was too late: persuaded, however, that the badger must have been killed, he passed his time in putting up prayers upon prayers for it.

After three years had gone by, one night the old man heard a voice near his door calling out, "Your reverence! your reverence!"

As the voice was like that of the badger, he jumped up as soon as he heard it, and ran out to open the door; and there, sure enough, was the badger. The priest, in great delight, cried out, "And so you are safe and sound, after all! Why have you been so long without coming here? I have been expecting you anxiously this long while."

So the badger came into the hut, and said, "If the money which you required had been for unlawful purposes, I could easily have procured as much as ever you might have wanted; but when I heard that it was to be offered to a temple for masses for your soul, I thought that, if I were to steal the hidden treasure of some other man, you could not apply to a sacred purpose money which had been obtained at the expense of his sorrow. So I went to the island of Sado, and gathering the sand and earth which had been cast away as worthless by the miners, fused it afresh in the fire; and at this work I spent months and days." As the badger finished speaking, the priest looked at the money which it had produced, and sure enough he saw that it was bright and new and clean; so he took the money, and received it respectfully, raising it to his head.

"And so you have had all this toil and labour on account of a foolish speech of mine? I have obtained my heart's desire, and am truly thankful."

As he was thanking the badger with great politeness and ceremony, the beast said, "In doing this I have but fulfilled my own wish; still I hope that you will tell this thing to no man."

"Indeed," replied the priest, "I cannot choose but tell this story. For if I keep the money in my poor hut, it will be stolen by thieves: I must either give it to some one to keep for me, or else at once offer it up at the temple. And when I do this, when people see a poor old priest with a sum of money quite unsuited to his station, they will think it very suspicious, and I shall have to tell the tale as it occurred; but as I shall say that the badger that gave me the money has ceased coming to my hut, you need not fear being waylaid, but can come, as of old, and shelter yourself from the cold." To this the badger nodded assent, and as long as the old priest lived, it came and spent the winter nights with him.

The Grateful Foxes

ONE fine spring day, two friends went out to a moor to gather fern, attended by a boy with a bottle of wine and a box of provisions. As they were straying about, they saw at the foot of a hill a fox that had brought out its cub to play; and whilst they looked on, struck by the strangeness of the sight, three children came up from a neighbouring village with baskets in their hands, on the same errand as themselves. As soon as the children saw the foxes, they picked up a bamboo stick and took the creatures stealthily in the rear; and when the old foxes took to flight, they surrounded them and beat them with the stick, so that they ran away as fast as their legs could carry them; but two of the boys held down the cub, and, seizing it by the scruff of the neck, went off in high glee.

The two friends were looking on all the while, and one of them, raising his voice, shouted out, "Hallo! you boys! what are you doing with that fox?"

The eldest of the boys replied, "We 're going to take him home and sell him to a young man in our village. He 'll buy him, and then he 'll boil him in a pot and eat him."

"Well," replied the other, after considering the matter attentively, "I suppose it 's all the same to you whom you sell him to. You 'd better let me have him."

"Oh, but the young man from our village promised us a good round sum if we could find a fox, and got us to come out to the hills and catch one; and so we can't sell him to you at any price."

"Well, I suppose it cannot be helped, then; but how much would the young man give you for the cub?"

"Oh, he 'll give us three hundred cash at least."

"Then I 'll give you half a bu; and so you 'll gain five hundred cash by the transaction."

"Oh, we 'll sell him for that, sir. How shall we hand him over to you?"

"Just tie him up here," said the other; and so he made fast the cub round the neck with the string of the napkin in which the luncheon box was wrapped, and gave half a bu to the three boys, who ran away delighted.

The man's friend, upon this, said to him, "Well, certainly you have got queer tastes. What on earth are you going to keep that fox for?"

"How very unkind of you to speak of my tastes like that. If we had not interfered just now, the fox's cub would have lost its life. If we had not seen the affair, there would have been no help for it. How could I stand by and see life taken? It was but a little I spent — only half a bu — to save the cub, but had it cost a fortune I should not have grudged it. I thought you were intimate enough with me to know my heart; but to-day you have accused me of being eccentric, and I see how mistaken I have been in you. However, our friendship shall cease from this day forth."

And when he had said this with a great deal of firmness, the other, retiring backward and bowing with his hands on his knees, replied:

"Indeed, indeed, I am filled with admiration at the goodness of your heart. When I hear you speak thus, I feel more than ever how great is the love I owe you. I thought that you might wish to use the cub as a sort of decoy to lead the old ones to you, that you might pray them to bring prosperity and virtue to your house. When I called you eccentric just now, I was but trying your heart, because I had some suspicions of you; and now I am truly ashamed of myself."

And as he spoke, still bowing, the other replied, "Really! was that indeed your thought? Then I pray you to forgive me for my violent language."

When the two friends had thus become reconciled, they examined the cub, and saw that it had a slight wound in its foot, and could not walk; and while they were thinking what they should do, they spied out the herb called "Doctor's

Nakasé," which was just sprouting; so they rolled up a little of it in their fingers and applied it to the part. Then they pulled out some boiled rice from their luncheon box and offered it to the cub, but it showed no sign of wanting to eat; so they stroked it gently on the back, and petted it; and as the pain of the wound seemed to have subsided, they were admiring the properties of the herb, when, opposite to them, they saw the old foxes sitting watching them by the side of some stacks of rice straw.

"Look there! the old foxes have come back, out of fear for their cub's safety. Come, we will set it free!" And with these words they untied the string round the cub's neck, and turned its head toward the spot where the old foxes sat; and as the wounded foot was no longer painful, with one bound it dashed to its parents' side and licked them all over for joy, while they seemed to bow their thanks, looking toward the two friends. So, with peace in their hearts, the latter went off to another place, and, choosing a pretty spot, produced the wine bottle and ate their noon-day meal; and after a pleasant day, they returned to their homes, and became firmer friends than ever.

Now the man who had rescued the fox's cub was a tradesman in good circumstances: he had three or four agents and two maid-servants, besides men-servants; and altogether he lived in a liberal manner. He was married, and this union had brought him one son, who had reached his tenth year, but had been attacked by a strange disease which defied all the physicians' skill and drugs. At last a famous physician prescribed the liver taken from a live fox, which, as he said, would certainly effect a cure. If that were not forthcoming, the most expensive medicine in the world would not restore the boy to health. When the parents heard this, they were at their wits' end. However, they told the state of the case to a man who lived on the mountains. "Even though our child should die for it," they said, "we will not ourselves deprive other creatures of their lives; but you, who live among the hills, are sure to hear when your neighbours go out fox-hunting. We don't care what price we might have to pay for a fox's liver; pray, buy one for us at any expense." So they pressed him to exert himself on their behalf;

and he, having promised faithfully to execute the commission, went his way.

In the night of the following day there came a messenger, who announced himself as coming from the person who had undertaken to procure the fox's liver; so the master of the house went out to see him.

"I have come from Mr. So-and-so. Last night the fox's liver that you required fell into his hands; so he sent me to bring it to you." With these words the messenger produced a small jar, adding, "In a few days he will let you know the price."

When he had delivered his message, the master of the house was greatly pleased and said, "Indeed, I am deeply grateful for this kindness, which will save my son's life."

Then the good wife came out, and received the jar with every mark of politeness.

"We must make a present to the messenger."

"Indeed, sir, I 've already been paid for my trouble."

"Well, at any rate, you must stop the night here."

"Thank you, sir: I 've a relation in the next village whom I have not seen for a long while, and I will pass the night with him;" and so he took his leave, and went away.

The parents lost no time in sending to let the physician know that they had procured the fox's liver. The next day the doctor came and compounded a medicine for the patient, which at once produced a good effect, and there was no little joy in the household. As luck would have it, three days after this the man whom they had commissioned to buy the fox's liver came to the house; so the good wife hurried out to meet him and welcome him.

"How quickly you fulfilled our wishes, and how kind of you to send at once! The doctor prepared the medicine, and now our boy can get up and walk about the room; and it 's all owing to your goodness."

"Wait a bit!" cried the guest, who did not know what to make of the joy of the two parents. "The commission with which you entrusted me about the fox's liver turned out to be a matter of impossibility, so I came to-day to make my excuses; and now I really can't understand what you are so grateful to me for."

"We are thanking you, sir," replied the master of the house, bowing with his hands on the ground, "for the fox's liver which we asked you to procure for us."

"I really am perfectly unaware of having sent you a fox's liver; there must be some mistake here. Pray inquire carefully into the matter."

"Well, this is very strange. Four nights ago, a man of some five or six and thirty years of age came with a verbal message from you, to the effect that you had sent him with a fox's liver, which you had just procured, and said that he would come and tell us the price another day. When we asked him to spend the night here, he answered that he would lodge with a relation in the next village, and went away."

The visitor was more and more lost in amazement, and, leaning his head on one side in deep thought, confessed that he could make nothing of it. As for the husband and wife, they felt out of countenance at having thanked a man so warmly for favours of which he denied all knowledge; and so the visitor took his leave, and went home.

That night there appeared at the pillow of the master of the house a woman of about one or two and thirty years of age, who said, "I am the fox that lives at such-and-such a mountain. Last spring, when I was taking out my cub to play, it was carried off by some boys, and only saved by your goodness. The desire to requite this kindness pierced me to the quick. At last, when calamity attacked your house, I thought that I might be of use to you. Your son's illness could not be cured without a liver taken from a live fox, so to repay your kindness I killed my cub and took out its liver; then its sire, disguising himself as a messenger, brought it to your house."

And as she spoke, the fox shed tears; and the master of the house, wishing to thank her, moved in bed, upon which his wife awoke and asked him what was the matter; but he, too, to her great astonishment, was biting the pillow and weeping bitterly.

"Why are you weeping thus?" asked she.

At last he sat up in bed, and said, "Last spring, when I was out on a pleasure excursion, I was the means of saving the life of a fox's cub, as I told you at the time. The other day I told Mr. So-and-so that, although my son were to die before my eyes, I would not be the means of killing a fox on purpose; but asked him in case he heard of any hunter killing a fox, to buy it for me. How the foxes came to hear of this I don't know; but the foxes to whom I had shown kindness killed their own cub and took out the liver; and the old dog-fox, disguising himself as a messenger from the person to whom we had confided the commisson, came here with it. His mate has just been at my pillow-side and told me all about it; hence it was that, in spite of myself, I was moved to tears."

When she heard this, the good wife likewise was blinded by her tears, and for a while they lay lost in thought; but at last, coming to themselves, they lighted the lamp on the shelf on which the family idol stood, and spent the night in reciting prayers and praises, and the next day they published the matter to the household and to their relations and friends. Now, although there are instances of men killing their own children to requite a favour, there is no other example of foxes having done such a thing; so the story became the talk of the whole country.

Now, the boy who had recovered through the efficacy of this medicine selected the prettiest spot on the premises to erect a shrine to Inari Sama, the Fox God, and offered sacrifice to the two old foxes, for whom he purchased the highest rank at court of the Mikado.

The Black Horse

ONCE there was a king, and he had three sons, and when the king died, they did not give a shade of anything to the youngest son, but an old white limping garron.

"If I get but this," quoth he, "it seems that I had best go with this same."

He was going with it right before him, sometimes walking, sometimes riding. When he had been riding a good while he thought that the garron would need a while of eating, so he came down to earth, and what should he see coming out of the heart of the western air toward him but a rider riding high, well, and right well.

"All hail, my lad," said he.

"Hail, king's son," said the other.

"What 's your news?" said the king's son.

"I 've got that," said the lad who came. "I am after breaking my heart riding this ass of a horse; but will you give me the limping white garron for him?"

"No," said the prince; "it would be a bad business for me."

"You need not fear," said the man that came, "there is no saying but that you might make better use of him than I. He has one value, there is no single place that you can think of in the four parts of the wheel of the world that the black horse will not take you there."

So the king's son got the black horse, and he gave the limping white garron.

Where should he think of being when he mounted but in the Realm Underwaves. He went, and before sunrise on the morrow he was there. What should he find when he got there but the son of the King Underwaves holding a court, and the people of the realm gathered to see if there was any one who would undertake to go to seek the daughter of the King of the Greeks to be the prince's wife. No one came forward, when who should come up but the rider of the black horse.

"You rider of the black horse," said the prince, "I lay you under crosses and under spells to have the daughter of the King of the Greeks here before the sun rises to-morrow.

The lad went out and he reached the black horse and leaned his elbow on his mane, and he heaved a sigh.

"Sigh of a king's son under spells!" said the horse; "but have no care; we shall do the thing that was set before you." And so off they went.

"Now," said the horse, "when we get near the great town of the Greeks, you will notice that the four feet of a horse never went to the town before. The king's daughter will see me from the top of the castle looking out of a window, and she will not be content without a turn of a ride upon me. Say that she may have that, but the horse will suffer no man but you to ride before a woman on him."

They came near the big town, and he fell to horsemanship; and the princess was looking out of the windows, and noticed the horse. The horsemanship pleased her, and she came out just as the horse had come.

"Give me a ride on the horse," said she.

"You shall have that," said he, "but the horse will let no man ride him before a woman but me."

"I have a horseman of my own," said she.

"If so, set him in front," said he.

Before the horseman mounted at all, when he tried to get up, the horse lifted his legs and kicked him off.

"Come then, yourself, and mount before me," said she; "I won't leave the matter so."

He mounted the horse and she behind him, and before she glanced from her she was nearer sky than earth. He was in Realm Underwaves with her before sunrise.

"You are come," said Prince Underwaves.

"I am come," said he.

"There you are, my hero," said the prince. "You are the son of a king, but I am a son of success. Anyhow, we shall have no delay or neglect now, but a wedding."

"Just gently," said the princess; "your wedding is not so short a way off as you suppose. Till I get the silver cup that my grandmother had at her wedding, and that my mother had as well, I will not marry, for I need to have it at my own wedding."

"You rider of the black horse," said the Prince Underwaves, "I set you under spells and under crosses unless the silver cup is here before dawn to-morrow."

Out the lad went and reached the horse and leaned his elbow on his mane, and he heaved a sigh.

"Sigh of a king's son under spells!" said the horse; "mount and you shall get the silver cup. The people of the realm are gathered about the king to-night, for he has missed his daughter, and when you get to the palace go in and leave me without; they will have the cup there going round the company. Go in and sit in their midst. Say nothing, and seem to be as one of the people of the place. But when the cup comes round to you, take it under your oxter, and come out to me with it, and we 'll go."

Away they went and they got to Greece, and he went into the palace and did as the black horse bade. He took the cup and came out and mounted, and before sunrise he was in the Realm Underwaves.

"You are come," said Prince Underwaves.

"I am come," said he.

"We had better get married now," said the prince to the Greek princess.

"Slowly and softly," said she. "I will not marry till I get the silver ring that my grandmother and my mother wore when they were wedded."

"You rider of the black horse," said the Prince Underwaves, "do that. Let 's have that ring here to-morrow at sunrise."

The lad went to the black horse and put his elbow on his crest and told him how it was.

"There never was a matter set before me harder than this matter which has now been set in front of me," said the horse, "but there is no help for it at any rate. Mount me. There is a snow mountain and an ice mountain and a mountain of fire between us and the winning of that ring. It is right hard for us to pass them."

Thus they went as they were, and about a mile from the snow mountain they were in a bad case with cold. As they came near it the lad struck the horse, and with the bound he gave the black horse was on the top of the snow mountain; at the next bound he was on the top of the ice mountain; at the third bound he went through the mountain of fire. When he had passed the mountains the lad was dragging at the horse's neck, as though he were about to lose himself. He went on before him down to a town below.

"Go down," said the black horse, "to a smithy; make an iron spike for every bone end in me."

Down he went as the horse desired, and he got the spikes made, and back he came with them.

"Stick them into me," said the horse, "every spike of them in every bone end that I have."

That he did; he stuck the spikes into the horse.

"There is a loch here," said the horse, "four miles long and four miles wide, and when I go out into it the loch will take fire and blaze. If you see the Loch of Fire going out before the sun rises, expect me, and if not, go your way."

Out went the black horse into the lake, and the lake became flame. Long was he stretched about the lake, beating his palms and roaring. Day came, and the loch did not go out.

But at the hour when the sun was rising out of the water the lake went out.

And the black horse rose in the middle of the water with one single spike in him, and the ring upon its end.

He came on shore, and down he fell beside the loch.

Then down went the rider. He got the ring, and he dragged the horse down to the side of a hill. He fell to sheltering him with his arms about him, and as the sun was rising he got better and better, till about midday, when he rose on his feet.

"Mount," said the horse, "and let us be gone."

He mounted on the black horse, and away they went.

He reached the mountains, and he leaped the horse at the fire mountain and was on the top. From the mountain of fire he leaped to the mountain of ice, and from the mountain of ice to the mountain of snow. He put the mountains past him, and by morning he was in Realm Underwaves.

"You are come," said the prince.

"I am," said he.

"That 's true," said Prince Underwaves. "A king's son are you, but a son of success am I. We shall have no more mistakes and delays, but a wedding this time."

"Go easy," said the Princess of the Greeks. "Your wedding is not so near as you think yet. Till you make a castle, I won't marry you. Not to your father's castle nor to your mother's will I go to dwell; but make me a castle for which your father's castle will not make washing water."

"You rider of the black horse, make that," said Prince Underwaves, "before the morrow's sun rises."

The lad went out to the horse and leaned his elbow on his neck and sighed, thinking that this castle never could be made for ever.

"There never came a turn in my road yet that is easier for me to pass than this," said the black horse.

The lad gave a glance from him and saw all that were there, and ever so many wrights and stone masons at work, and the castle was ready before the sun rose.

He shouted at the Prince Underwaves, and he saw the castle. He tried to pluck out his eye, thinking that it was a false sight.

"Son of King Underwaves," said the rider of the black horse, "don't think that you have a false sight; this is a true sight."

"That 's true," said the prince. "You are a son of success, but I am a son of success, too. There will be no more mistakes and delays, but a wedding now."

"No," said she. "The time is come. Should we not go to look at the castle? There's time enough to get married before the night comes."

They went to the castle and the castle was without a fault.

"I see one," said the prince. "One want at least to be made good. A well must be made inside, so that water may not be far to fetch when there is a feast or a wedding in the castle."

"That won't be long undone," said the rider of the black horse.

The well was made, and it was seven fathoms deep and two or three fathoms wide, and they looked at the well on the way to the wedding.

"It is all very good," said she, "but for one little fault yonder."

"Where is it?" said Prince Underwaves.

"There," said she.

He bent him down to look. She came out, and she put her two hands at his back, and cast him in.

"Be thou there," said she. "If I go to be married, thou art not the man; but the man who did each exploit that has been done, and, if he chooses, him will I have."

Away she went with the rider of the little black horse to the wedding.

And at the end of three years after that, so it was that he first remembered the black horse or where he left him.

He got up and went out, and he was very sorry for his neglect of the black horse. He found him just where he left him.

"Good luck to you, gentleman," said the horse. "You seem as if you had got something that you like better than me."

"I have not got that, and I won't; but it came over me to forget you," said he.

"I don't mind," said the horse, "it will make no difference. Raise your sword and smite off my head."

"Fortune will not allow that I should do that," said he.

"Do it instantly, or I will do it to you," said the horse.

So the lad drew his sword and smote off the horse's head; then he lifted his two palms and uttered a doleful cry.

What should he hear behind him but "All hail, my brother-in-law!"?

He looked behind him, and there was the finest man he ever set eyes upon.

"What set you weeping for the black horse?" said he.

"This," said the lad, "that there never was born of man or beast a creature in this world that I was fonder of."

"Would you take me for him?" said the stranger.

"If I could think you the horse I would; but if not, I would rather have the horse," said the rider.

"I am the black horse," said the lad, "and if I were not, how should you have all these things that you went to seek in my father's house. Since I went under spells, many a man have I ran at before you met me. They had but one word amongst them: they could not keep me, nor manage me, and they never kept me a couple of days. But when I fell in with you, you kept me till the time ran out that was to come from the spells. And now you shall go home with me, and we will make a wedding in my father's house."

Truth's Triumph

SEVERAL hundred years ago there was a certain Rajah who had twelve wives, but no children, and though he caused many prayers to be said, and presents made in temples far and near, never a son nor a daughter had he. Now this Rajah had a Wuzeer who was a very, very wise old man, and it came to pass that one day, when he was travelling in a distant part of his kingdom, accompanied by this Wuzeer and the rest of his court, he came upon a large garden, in walking round which he was particularly struck by a little tree which grew there. It was a bringal tree, not above two feet in height. It had no leaves, but on it grew a hundred and one bringals. The Rajah stopped to count them, and then turning to the Wuzeer in great astonishment, said, "It is to me a most unaccountable thing, that this little tree should have no leaves, but a hundred and one bringals growing on it. You are a wise man — can you guess what this means?"

The Wuzeer replied, "I can interpret this marvel to you, but if I do, you will most likely not believe me; promise therefore that if I tell you, you will not cause me to be killed as having told (as you imagine) a lie."

The Rajah promised, and the Wuzeer continued: "The meaning of this little bringal tree, with the hundred and one bringals growing on it, is this. Whoever marries the daughter of the Malee in charge of this garden will have a hundred and one children — a hundred sons and one daughter."

The Rajah said. "Where is the maiden to be seen?"

The Wuzeer answered, "When a number of great people like you and all your court come into a little village like this, the poor people, and especially the children, are frightened and run away and hide themselves; therefore, as long as you stay here as

Rajah you cannot hope to see her. Your only means will be to send away your suite, and cause it to be announced that you have left the place. Then, if you walk daily in this garden, you may some morning meet the pretty GuzraBai, of whom I speak."

Upon this advice the Rajah acted; and one day whilst walking in the garden he saw the Malee's young daughter, a girl of twelve years old, busy gathering flowers. He went forward to accost her, but she, seeing that he was not one of the villagers, but a stranger, was shy, and ran home to her father's house.

The Rajah followed, for he was very much struck with her grace and beauty; in fact, he fell in love with her as soon as he saw her, and thought he had never seen a king's daughter half so charming.

When he got to the Malee's house the door was shut; so he called out, "Let me in, good Malee; I am the Rajah, and I wish to marry your daughter."

The Malee only laughed, and answered, "A pretty tale to tell a simple man, indeed! You a Rajah! why the Rajah is miles away. You had better go home, my good fellow, for there's no welcome for you here!" But the Rajah continued calling till the Malee opened the door; who then was indeed surprised, seeing it was truly no other than the Rajah, and he asked what he could do for him.

The Rajah said, "I wish to marry your beautiful daughter, Guzra Bai."

"No, no," said the Malee, "this joke won't do. None of your Princes in disguise for me. You may think you are a great Rajah and I only a poor Malee, but I tell you that makes no difference at all to me. Though you were king of all the earth, I would not permit you to come here and amuse yourself chattering to my girl, only to fill her head with nonsense, and to break her heart."

"In truth, good man, you do me wrong," answered the Rajah humbly: "I mean what I say; I wish to marry your daughter."

"Do not think," retorted the Malee, "that I 'll make a fool of myself because I 'm only a Malee, and believe what you 've got to say, because you 're a great Rajah. Rajah or no Rajah is all one to me. If you mean what you say, if you care for my daughter and wish to be married to her, come and be married; but I 'll have none of your new-fangled forms and court ceremonies hard to be understood; let the girl be married by her father's hearth and under her father's roof, and let us invite to the wedding our old friends and acquaintances whom we 've known all our lives, and before we ever thought of you."

The Rajah was not angry, but amused, and rather pleased than otherwise at the old man's frankness, and he consented to all that was desired.

The village beauty, Guzra Bai, was therefore married with as much pomp as they could muster, but in village fashion, to the great Rajah, who took her home with him, followed by the tears and blessings of her parents and playmates.

The twelve kings' daughters were by no means pleased at this addition to the number of the Ranees; and they agreed amongst themselves that it would be highly derogatory to their dignity to permit Guzra Bai to associate with them, and that the Rajah their husband, had offered them an unpardonable insult in marrying a Malee's daughter, which was to be revenged upon her the very first opportunity.

Having made this league, they tormented poor Guzra Bai so much that, to save her from their persecutions, the Rajah built her a little house of her own, where she lived very, very happily for a short time.

At last one day he had occasion to go and visit a distant part of his dominions, but fearing his high-born wives might ill-use Guzra Bai in his absence, at parting he gave her a little golden bell, saying, "If while I am away you are in any trouble, or any one should be unkind to you, ring this little bell, and wherever I am I shall instantly hear it, and will return to your aid."

No sooner had the Rajah gone, than Guzra Bai thought she would try the power of the bell. So she rang it.

The Rajah instantly appeared. "What do you want?" he said.

"Oh, nothing," she replied. "I was foolish. I could hardly believe what you told me could be true, and thought I would try."

"Now you will believe, I hope," he said, and went away. A second time she rang the bell. Again the Rajah returned.

"Oh, pardon me, husband," she said; "it was wrong of me not to trust you, but I hardly thought you could return again from so far."

And again he went away. A third time she rang the golden bell. "Why do you ring again, Guzra Bai?" asked the Rajah sternly, as for a third time he returned.

"I don't know, indeed; indeed I beg your pardon," she said; "but I know not why, I felt so frightened."

"Have any of the Ranees been unkind to you?" he asked.

"No, none," she answered; "in fact, I have seen none of them."

"You are a silly child," said he, stroking her hair. "Affairs of the state call me away. You must try and keep a good heart till my return;" and for the fourth time he disappeared.

A little while after this, wonderful to relate, Guzra Bai had a hundred and one children — a hundred boys and one girl. When the Ranees heard this, they said to each other, "Guzra Bai, the Malee's daughter, will rank higher than us; she will have great power and influence as mother to the heir to the Raj; let us kill these children, and tell our husband that she is a sorceress; then will he love her no longer, and his old affection for us will return." So these twelve wicked Ranees all went over to Guzra Bai's house. When Guzra Bai saw them coming, she feared they meant to do her some harm, so she seized her little golden bell, and rang, and rang, and rang — but no Rajah came. She had called him back so often that he did not believe she really needed his help. And thus the poor woman was left to the mercy of her implacable enemies.

Now the nurse who had charge of the hundred and one babies was an old servant of the twelve Ranees, and moreover a very wicked woman, able and willing to do whatever her twelve wicked old mistresses ordered. So when they said to her, "Can you kill these children?" she answered, "Nothing is easier; I will throw them out upon the dust-heap behind the palace, where the rats and hawks and vultures will have left none of them remaining by to-morrow morning."

"So be it," said the Ranees. Then the nurse took the hundred and one little innocent children — the hundred little boys and the one little girl — and threw them behind the palace on the dust-heap, close to some large rat-holes; and after that, she and the twelve Ranees placed a very large stone in each of the babies' cradles, and said to Guzra Bai, "Oh, you evil witch in disguise, do not hope any longer to impose by your arts on the Rajah's credulity. See, your children have all turned into stones. See these, your pretty babies!" — and with that they tumbled the hundred and one stones down in a great heap on the floor. Then Guzra Bai began to cry, for she knew it was not true; but what could one poor woman do against thirteen? At the Rajah's return the twelve Ranees accused Guzra Bai of being a witch, and the nurse testified that the hundred and one children she had charge of had turned into stones, and the Rajah believed them rather than Guzra Bai, and he ordered her to be imprisoned for life.

Meanwhile a Bandicote had heard the pitiful cries of the children, and taking pity on them, dragged them all, one by one, into her hole, out of the way of kites and vultures. She assembled all the Bandicotes from far and near, and told them what she had done, begging them to assist in finding food for the children. Then every day a hundred and one Bandicotes would come, each bringing a little bit of food in his mouth, and give it to one of the children; and so day by day they grew stronger and stronger, until they were able to run about, and then they used to play of a morning at the mouth of the Bandicote's hole, running in there to sleep every night. But one fine day who should come by but the wicked old nurse! Fortunately all the boys were in the hole, and the little girl, who was playing outside, on seeing her ran in there too, but not before the nurse had seen her. She immediately went to the twelve Ranees and related this, saying, "I cannot help thinking some of the children may still be living in those rat-holes. You had better send and have them dug out and killed."

"We dare not do that," answered they, "for fear of causing suspicion; but we will order some labourers to dig up that ground and make it into a field, and that will effectually smother any of the children who may still be alive."

This plan was approved and forthwith carried into execution; but the good Bandicote, who happened that day to be out on a foraging expedition in the palace, heard all about it there, and immediately running home, took all the children from her hole to a large well some distance off, where she hid them in the hollows behind the steps leading down to the well, laying one child under each step.

Here they would have been quite safe, had not the Dhobee happened to go down to the well that day to wash some clothes, taking with him his little girl. While her father was drawing up water, the child amused herself running up and down the steps of the well. Now each time her weight pressed down a step it gave the child hidden underneath a little squeeze. All the hundred boys bore this without uttering a sound; but when the Dhobee's child trod on the step under which the little girl was hidden, she cried out, "How can you be so cruel to me, trampling on me in this way? Have pity on me, for I am a little girl as well as you."

When the child heard these words proceeding from the stone, she ran in great alarm to her father, saying, "Father, I don't know what's the matter, but something alive is certainly under those stones. I heard it speak; but whether it is a Rakshas or an angel or a human being I cannot tell." Then the Dhobee went to the twelve Ranees to tell them the wonderful news about the voice in the well; and they said to each other, "Maybe it 's some of Guzra Bai's children; let us send and have this inquired into." So they sent some people to pull down the well and see if some evil spirits were not there.

Then labourers went to pull down the well. Now, close to the well was a little temple dedicated to Gunputti, containing a small shrine and a little clay image of the god. When the children felt the well being pulled down they called out for help and protection to Gunputti, who took pity on them and changed them into trees growing by his temple — a hundred little mango trees all round in a circle (which were the hundred little boys), and a little rose bush in the middle, covered with red and white roses, which was the little girl.

The labourers pulled down the well, but they found nothing there but a poor old Bandicote, which they killed. Then, by order of the twelve wicked Ranees, they sacrilegiously destroyed the little temple. But they found no children there, either. However, the Dhobee's mischievous little daughter had gone with her father to witness the work of destruction, and as they were looking on, she said, "Father, do look at all those funny little trees; I never remember noticing them here before." And being very inquisitive, she started off to have a nearer look at them. There in a circle grew the hundred little mango trees, and in the centre of all the little rose bush, bearing the red and white roses.

The girl rushed by the mango trees, who uttered no words, and running up to the rose bush, began gathering some of the flowers. At this the rose bush trembled very much, and sighed and said, "I am a little girl as well as you; how can you be so cruel? You are breaking all my ribs."

Then the child ran back to her father and said, "Come and listen to what the rose bush says." And the father repeated the news to the twelve Ranees, who ordered that a great fire should be made, and the hundred and one little trees be burned in it, root and branch, till not a stick remained.

The fire was made, and the hundred and one little trees were dug up and just going to be put into it, when Gunputti, taking pity on them, caused a tremendous storm to come on, which put out the fire and flooded the country and swept the hundred and one trees into the river, where they were carried down a long, long way by the torrent, until at last the children were landed, restored to their own shapes, on the river bank, in the midst of a wild jungle, very far from any human habitation.

Here these children lived for ten years, happy in their mutual love and affection. Generally every day fifty of the boys would go out to collect roots and berries for their food, leaving fifty at home to take care of their little sister; but sometimes they put her in some safe place, and all would go out together for the day; nor were they ever molested in their excursions by bear, panther, snake, scorpion, or other noxious creature. One day all the brothers put their little sister safely up in a fine shady tree, and went out together to hunt. After rambling on for some time they came to the hut of a savage Rakshas, who in the disguise of an old woman had lived for many years in the jungle.

The Rakshas, angry at this invasion of her domain, no sooner saw them than she changed them all into crows. Night came on, and their little sister was anxiously awaiting her brothers' return, when on a sudden she heard a loud whirring sound in the air, and round the tree flocked a hundred black crows, cawing and offering her berries and roots which they had dug up with their sharp bills. Then the little sister guessed too truly what must have happened — that some malignant spirit had metamorphosed her brothers into this hideous shape; and at the sad sight she began to cry.

Time wore on; every morning the crows flew away to collect food for her and for themselves, and every evening they returned to roost in the branches of the high tree where she sat the livelong day, crying as if her heart would break.

At last so many bitter tears had she shed that they made a little stream which flowed from the foot of the tree right down through the jungle.

Some months after this, one fine day, a young Rajah from a neighbouring country happened to be hunting in this very jungle; but he had not been very successful. Toward the close of the day he found himself faint and weary, having missed his way and lost his comrades, with no companion save his dogs, who, being thirsty, ran hurriedly hither and thither in search of water. After some time, they saw in the distance what looked like a clear stream; the dogs rushed there and the tired prince, following them, flung himself down on the grass by the water's brink, thinking to sleep there for the night; and, with his hands under his head, stared up into the leafy branches of the tree above him. Great was his astonishment to see high up in in the air an immense number of crows, and above them all a most lovely young girl, who was feeding them with berries and wild fruits. Quick as thought, he climbed the tree, and bringing her carefully and gently down, seated her on the grass beside him, saying, "Tell me, pretty lady, who you are, and how you come to be living in this dreary place." So she told him all her adventures, except that she did not say the hundred crows were her hundred brothers. Then the Rajah said, "Do not cry any more, fair Princess; you shall come home with me and be my Ranee, and my father and mother shall be yours."

At this she smiled and dried her eyes, but quickly added, "You will let me take these crows with me, will you not? for I love them dearly, and I cannot go away unless they may come too."

"To be sure," he answered. "You may bring all the animals in the jungle with you, if you like, if you will only come."

So he took her home to his father's house, and the old Rajah and Ranee wondered much at this jungle lady, when they saw her rare beauty, her modest, gentle ways and her queenly grace. Then the young Rajah told them how she was a persecuted Princess, and asked their leave to marry her; and because her loving goodness had won all hearts, they gave their consent as joyfully as if she had been daughter of the greatest of Rajahs, and brought with her a splendid dower; and they called her Draupadi Bai.

Draupadi had some beautiful trees planted in front of her palace, in which the crows, her brothers, used to live, and she daily with her own hands boiled a quantity of rice, which she would scatter for them to eat as they flocked around her. Now some time after this, Draupadi Bai had a son, who was called Ramchundra. He was a very good boy, and his mother, Draupadi Bai, used to take him to school every morning, and go and fetch him home in the evening. But one day, when Ramchundra was about fourteen years old, it happened that Draupadi Bai did not go to fetch him home from school as she was wont; and on his return he found her sitting under the trees in front of her palace, stroking the glossy black crows that flocked around her, and weeping.

Then Ramchundra threw down his bundle of books and said to his mother, putting his elbows on her knees, and looking up in her face, "Mammy, dear, tell me why you are now crying, and what it is that makes you so often sad."

"Oh, nothing, nothing," she answered.

"Yes, dear mother," said he, "do tell me. Can I help you? If I can, I will."

Draupadi Bai shook her head. "Alas, no, my son," she said; "you are too young to help me; and as for my grief, I have never told it to any one. I cannot tell it to you now." But Ramchundra continued begging and praying her to tell him, until at last she did; relating to him all her own and his uncles' sad history; and lastly, how they had been changed by a Rakshas into the black crows he saw around him.

Then the boy sprang up and said, "Which way did your brothers take when they met the Rakshas?"

"How can I tell?" she asked.

"Why," he answered, "I thought perhaps you might remember on which side they returned that first night to you, after being bewitched."

"Oh," she said, "they came toward the tree from that part of the jungle which lies in a straight line behind the palace."

"Very well," cried Ramchundra, joyfully, "I also will go there, and find out this wicked old Rakshas, and learn by what means they may be disenchanted."

"No, no, my son," she answered, "I cannot let you go; see, I have lost father and mother, and these my hundred brothers; and now, if you fall into the Rakshas's clutches as well as they, and are lost to me, what will life have worth living for?"

To this he replied, "Do not fear for me, mother; I will be wary and discreet." And going to his father, he said, "Father, it is time I should see something of the world. I beg you to permit me to travel and see other lands."

The Rajah answered, "You shall go. Tell me what attendants you would like to accompany you."

"Give me," said Ramchundra, "a horse to ride, and a groom to take care of it." The Rajah consented, and Ramchundra set off riding toward the jungle; but as soon as he got there, he sent his horse back by the groom with a message to his parents and proceeded alone, on foot.

After wandering about for some time he came upon a small hut, in which lay an ugly old woman fast asleep. She had long claws instead of hands, and her hair hung down all around her in a thick black tangle. Ramchundra knew, by the whole appearance of the place, that he must have reached the Rakshas's abode of which he was in search; so, stealing softly in, he sat down and began shampooing her head. At last the Rakshas woke up. "You dear little boy," she said, "do not be afraid; I am only a poor old woman, and will not hurt you. Stay with me, and you shall be my servant." This she said not from any feeling of kindness or pity for Ramchundra, but merely because she thought he might be helpful to her. So the young Rajah remained in her service, determining to stay there till he should have learned from her all that he wished to know.

Thus one day he said to her, "Good mother, what is the use of all those little jars of water you have arranged round your house?"

She answered, "That water possesses certain magical attributes; if any of it is sprinkled on people enchanted by me, they instantly resume their former shape."

"And what," he continued, "is the use of your wand?"

"That," she replied, "has many supernatural powers; for instance, by simply uttering your wish and waving it in the air, you can conjure up a mountain, a river or a forest in a moment of time."

Another day Ramchundra said to her, "Your hair, good mother, is dreadfully tangled; pray let me comb it."

"No," she said, "you must not touch my hair; it would be dangerous; for every hair has power to set the jungle on fire."

"How is that?" he asked.

She replied, "The least fragment of my hair thrown in the direction of the jungle would instantly set it in a blaze."

Having learned all this, one day when it was very hot, and the old Rakshas was drowsy, Ramchundra begged leave to shampoo her head, which speedily sent her to sleep; then, gently pulling out two or three of her hairs, he got up, and taking in one hand her wand, and in the other two jars of the magic water, he stealthily left the hut; but he had not gone far before she woke up, and instantly divining what he had done, pursued him with great rapidity. Ramchundra, looking back and perceiving that she was gaining upon him, waved the enchanted wand and created a great river, which suddenly rolled its tumultuous waves between them; but, quick as thought, the Rakshas swam the river.

Then he turned, and waving the wand again, caused a high mountain to rise between them; but the Rakshas climbed the mountain. Nearer she came, and yet nearer; each time he turned to use the wand and put obstacles in her way, the delay gave her a few minutes' advantage, so that he lost almost as much as he gained. Then, as a last resource, he scattered the hairs he had stolen to the winds, and instantly the jungle on the hill side, through which the Rakshas was coming, was set in a blaze; the fire rose higher and higher, the wicked old Rakshas was consumed by the flames, and Ramchundra pursued his journey in safety until he reached his father's palace. Draupadi Bai was overjoyed to see her son again, and he led her out into the garden, and scattered the magic water on the hundred black crows, which instantly recovered their human forms, and stood up one hundred fine, handsome young men.

Then were there rejoicings throughout the country, because the Ranee's brothers had been disenchanted; and the Rajah sent out into all neighbouring lands to invite their Rajahs and Ranees to a great feast in honour of his brothers-in-law.

Among others who came to the feast was the Rajah, Draupadi Bai's father, and the twelve wicked Ranees, his wives.

When they were all assembled, Draupadi arose and said to him, "Noble sir, we had looked to see your wife Guzra Bai with you. Pray you tell us wherefore she has not accompanied you."

The Rajah was much surprised to learn that Draupadi Bai knew anything about Guzra Bai, and he said, "Speak not of her: she is a wicked woman; it is fit that she should end her days in prison."

But Draupadi Bai and her husband, and her hundred brothers rose and said, "We require, O Rajah, that you send home instantly and fetch hither that much injured lady, which, if you refuse to do, your wives shall be imprisoned, and you ignominiously expelled this kingdom."

The Rajah could not guess what the meaning of this was, and thought they merely wished to pick a quarrel with him; but not much caring whether Guzra Bai came or not, he sent for her as was desired. When she arrived, her daughter, Draupadi Bai, and her hundred sons, with Draupadi Bai's husband and the young Ramchundra, went out to the gate to meet her, and conducted her into the palace with all honour. Then, standing around her, they turned to the Rajah, her husband, and related to him the story of their lives; how that they were his children, and Guzra Bai their mother; how she had been cruelly calumniated by the twelve wicked Ranees, and they in constant peril of their lives; but having miraculously escaped many terrible dangers, still lived to pay him duteous service and to cheer and support his old age.

At this news the whole company was very much astonished. The Rajah, overjoyed, embraced his wife, Guzra Bai, and it was agreed that she and their hundred sons should return with him to his own land, which accordingly was done. Ramchundra lived very happily with his father and mother to the day of their death, when he ascended the throne, and became a very popular Rajah; and the twelve wicked old Ranees, who had conspired against Guzra Bai and her children, were, by order of the Rajah, burned to death. Thus truth triumphed in the end; but so unequally is human justice meted out that the old nurse, who worked their evil will, and was in fact the most guilty wretch of all, is said to have lived unpunished, to have died in the bosom of her family, and to have had as big a funeral pile as any virtuous Hindoo.

The Feast of the Lanterns

WANG CHIH was only a poor man, but he had a wife and children to love, and they made him so happy that he would not have changed places with the Emperor himself.

He worked in the fields all day, and at night his wife always had a bowl of rice ready for his supper. And sometimes, for a treat, she made him some bean soup, or gave him a little dish of fried pork.

But they could not afford pork very often; he generally had to be content with rice.

One morning, as he was setting off to his work, his wife sent Han Chung, his son, running after him to ask him to bring home some firewood.

"I shall have to go up into the mountain for it at noon," he said. "Go and bring me my axe, Han Chung."

Han Chung ran for his father's axe, and Ho-Seen-Ko, his little sister, came out of the cottage with him.

"Remember it is the Feast of Lanterns to-night, father," she said. "Don't fall asleep up on the mountain; we want you to come back and light them for us."

She had a lantern in the shape of a fish, painted red and black and yellow, and Han Chung had got a big round one, all bright crimson, to carry in the procession; and, besides that, there were two large lanterns to be hung outside the cottage door as soon at it grew dark.

Wang Chih was not likely to forget the Feast of Lanterns, for the children had talked of nothing else for a month, and he promised to come home as early as he could.

At noontide, when his fellow-labourers gave up working, and sat down to rest and eat, Wang Chih took his axe and went up the mountain slope to find a small tree he might cut down for fuel.

He walked a long way, and at last saw one growing at the mouth of a cave.

"This will be just the thing," he said to himself. But, before striking the first blow, he peeped into the cave to see if it were empty.

To his surprise, two old men, with long, white beards, were sitting inside playing chess, as quietly as mice, with their eyes fixed on the chessboard.

Wang Chih knew something of chess, and he stepped in and watched them for a few minutes.

"As soon as they look up I can ask them if I may chop down a tree," he said to himself. But they did not look up, and by and by Wang Chih got so interested in the game that he put down his axe, and sat on the floor to watch it better.

The two old men sat cross-legged on the ground, and the chessboard rested on a slab, like a stone table, between them.

On one corner of the slab lay a heap of small, brown objects which Wang Chih took at first to be date stones; but after a time the chess-players ate one each, and put one in Wang Chih's mouth; and he found it was not a date stone at all.

It was a delicious kind of sweetmeat, the like of which he had never tasted before; and the strangest thing about it was that it took his hunger and thirst away.

He had been both hungry and thirsty when he came into the cave, as he had not waited to have his midday meal with the other field-workers; but now he felt quite comforted and refreshed.

He sat there some time longer, and noticed that as the old men frowned over the chessboard, their beards grew longer and longer, until they swept the floor of the cave, and even found their way out of the door.

"I hope my beard will never grow as quickly," said Wang Chih, as he rose and took up his axe again.

Then one of the old men spoke, for the first time. "Our beards have not grown quickly, young man. How long is it since you came here?"

"About half an hour, I dare say," replied Wang Chih. But as he spoke, the axe crumbled to dust beneath his fingers, and the second chess-player laughed, and pointed to the little brown sweetmeats on the table.

"Half an hour, or half a century — aye, half a thousand years, are all alike to him who tastes of these. Go down into your village and see what has happened since you left it."

So Wang Chih went down as quickly as he could from the mountain, and found the fields where he had worked covered with houses, and a busy town where his own little village had been. In vain he looked for his house, his wife, and his children.

There were strange faces everywhere; and although when evening came the Feast of Lanterns was being held once more, there was no Ho-Seen-Ko carrying her red and yellow fish, or Han Chung with his flaming red ball.

At last he found a woman, a very, very old woman, who told him that when she was a tiny girl she remembered her grandmother saying how, when *she* was a tiny girl, a poor young man had been spirited away by the Genii of the mountains, on the day of the Feast of Lanterns, leaving his wife and little children with only a few handfuls of rice in the house

"Moreover, if you wait while the procession passes, you will see two children dressed to represent Han Chung and Ho-Seen-Ko, and their mother carrying the empty rice-bowl between them; for this is done every year to remind people to take care of the widow and fatherless," she said. So Wang Chih waited in the street; and in a little while the procession came to an end; and the last three figures in it were a boy and a girl, dressed like his own two children, walking on either side of a young woman carrying a rice-bowl. But she was not like his wife in anything but her dress, and the children were not at all like Han Chung and Ho-Seen-Ko; and poor Wang Chih's heart was very heavy as he walked away out of the town.

He slept out on the mountain, and early in the morning found his way back to the cave where the two old men were playing chess.

At first they said they could do nothing for him, and told him to go away and not disturb them; but Wang Chih would not go, and they soon found the only way to get rid of him was to give him some really good advice.

"You must go to the White Hare of the Moon, and ask him for a bottle of the elixir of life. If you drink that you will live forever," said one of them.

"But I don't want to live forever," objected Wang Chih. "I wish to go back and live in the days when my wife and children were here."

"Ah, well! For that you must mix the elixir of life with some water out of the sky-dragon's mouth."

"And where is the sky-dragon to be found?" inquired Wang Chih.

"In the sky, of course. You really ask very stupid questions. He lives in a cloud-cave. And when he comes out of it he breathes fire, and sometimes water. If he is breathing fire you will be burnt up, but if it is only water, you will easily be able to catch some in a little bottle. What else do you want?"

For Wang Chih still lingered at the mouth of the cave.

"I want a pair of wings to fly with, and a bottle to catch the water in," he replied boldly.

So they gave him a little bottle; and before he had time to say "Thank you!" a white crane came sailing past, and lighted on the ground close to the cave.

"The crane will take you wherever you like," said the old men. "Go now, and leave us in peace."

So Wang Chih sat on the white crane's back, and was taken up, and up, and up through the sky to the cloud-cave where the sky-dragon lived. And the dragon had the head of a camel, the horns of a deer, the eyes of a rabbit, the ears of a cow and the claws of a hawk.

Besides this, he had whiskers and a beard, and in his beard was a bright pearl.

All these things show that he was a real, genuine dragon, and if you ever meet a dragon who is not exactly like this, you will know he is only a make-believe one.

Wang Chih felt rather frightened when he perceived the cave in the distance, and if it had not been for the thought of seeing his wife again, and his little boy and girl, he would have been glad to turn back.

While he was far away the cloud-cave looked like a dark hole in the midst of a soft, white, woolly mass, such as one sees in the sky on an April day; but as he came nearer he found the cloud was as hard as a rock, and covered with a kind of dry, white grass.

When he got there, he sat down on a tuft of grass near the cave, and considered what he should do next.

The first thing was, of course, to bring the dragon out, and the next to make him breathe water instead of fire.

"I have it!" cried Wang Chih at last; and he nodded his head so many times that the white crane expected to see it fall off.

He struck a light, and set the grass on fire, and it was so dry that the flames spread all around the entrance to the cave, and made such a smoke and crackling that the sky-dragon put his head out to see what was the matter.

"Ho! ho!" cried the dragon, when he saw what Wang Chih had done, "I can soon put this to rights." And he breathed once, and the water came out his nose and mouth in three streams.

But this was not enough to put the fire out. Then he breathed twice, and the water came out in three mighty rivers, and Wang Chih, who had taken care to fill his bottle when the first stream began to flow, sailed away on the white crane's back as fast as he could, to escape being drowned.

The rivers poured over the cloud rock, until there was not a spark left alight, and rushed down through the sky into the sea below.

Fortunately, the sea lay right underneath the dragon's cave, or he would have done some nice mischief. As it was, the people on the coast looked out across the water toward Japan, and saw three inky-black clouds stretching from the sky into the sea.

"My word! There is a fine rain-storm out at sea!" they said to each other.

But, of course, it was nothing of the kind; it was only the sky-dragon putting out the fire Wang Chih had kindled.

Meanwhile, Wang Chih was on his way to the moon, and when he got there he went straight to the hut where the Hare of the Moon lived, and knocked at the door.

The Hare was busy pounding the drugs which make up the elixir of life; but he left his work, and opened the door, and invited Wang Chih to come in.

He was not ugly, like the dragon; his fur was quite white and soft and glossy, and he had lovely, gentle brown eyes.

The Hare of the Moon lives a thousand years, as you know, and when he is five hundred years old he changes his colour, from brown to white, and becomes, if possible, better tempered and nicer than he was before.

As soon as he heard what Wang Chih wanted, he opened two windows at the back of the hut, and told him to look through each of them in turn.

"Tell me what you see," said the Hare, going back to the table where he was pounding the drugs.

"I can see a great many houses and people," said Wang Chih, "and streets — why, this is the town I was in yesterday, the one which has taken the place of my old village."

Wang Chih stared, and grew more and more puzzled. Here he was up in the moon, and yet he could have thrown a stone into the busy street of the Chinese town below his window.

"How does it come here?" he stammered, at last.

"Oh, that is my secret," replied the wise old Hare. "I know how to do a great many things which would surprise you. But the question is, do you want to go back there?"

Wang Chih shook his head.

"Then close the window. It is the window of the Present. And look through the other, which is the window of the Past."

Wang Chih obeyed, and through this window he saw his own dear little village, and his wife, and Han Chung and Ho-Seen-Ko jumping about her as she hung up the coloured lanterns outside the door.

"Father won't be in time to light them for us, after all," Han Chung was saying.

Wang Chih turned, and looked eagerly at the White Hare.

"Let me go to them," he said. "I have got a bottle of water from the sky-dragon's mouth, and ——"

"That's all right," said the White Hare. "Give it to me."

He opened the bottle, and mixed the contents carefully with a few drops of the elixir of life, which was clear as crystal, and of which each drop shone like a diamond as he poured it in.

"Now, drink this," he said to Wang Chih, "and it will give you the power of living once more in the past, as you desire."

Wang Chih held out his hand, and drank every drop.

The moment he had done so, the window grew larger, and he saw some steps leading from it down into the village street.

Thanking the Hare, he rushed through it, and ran toward his own house, arriving in time to take the taper from his wife's hand with which she was about to light the red and yellow lanterns which swung over the door.

"What has kept you so long, father? Where have you been?" asked Han Chung, while little Ho-Seen-Ko wondered why he kissed and embraced them all so eagerly.

But Wang Chih did not tell them his adventures just then; only when darkness fell, and the Feast of Lanterns began, he took his part in it with a merry heart.

The Lake of Gems

ONCE upon a time, so very long ago that even the great-grandfathers of our great-grandmothers had not been born, there lived in the city of Kwen-lu a little Chinese boy named Pei-Hang.

His father and mother loved him dearly, and did all they could to shield him from the power of the evil Genii, or spirits, of whom there were a great many in China. Of course, there were some good Genii too, but most of them were very much the reverse, and Pei-Hang's mother was always taking precautions against them.

Now it is said that a wicked Geni will not come near a Chinese boy if he has some red silk braided in with his pigtail, or if he wears a silver chain round his neck.

And the most daring Geni has a great dread of old fishing-nets.

Pei-Hang's mother made him a little shirt out of an old fishing-net to wear next to his skin, and she took care that his pigtail should be plaited with the brightest red silk she could buy.

She was particular in having his head shaved in exactly the right way, too, and to have a tuft left sticking up in the luckiest place.

With all these precautions Pei-Hang got safely over the troubles of his babyhood, and grew from a little boy into a big one, and from a boy to a tall and handsome youth; and he left off wearing his netted shirt, although the silver chain still hung round his neck and there was red silk in his pigtail.

"It is time that Pei-Hang saw a little more," said his father. "He must go to Chang-ngan, and study under the wise men there, and find out what the world is thinking about."

Chang-ngan was the old capital of China, a very great city indeed, and Pin-Too, the master to whom Pei-Hang was sent, was the wisest man in it.

And there Pei-Hang soon learned what the world was thinking about, and many things besides. And as soon as he was eighteen he took the red silk out of his pigtail and the silver chain from his neck; for grown-up people do not need charms to protect them from the Genii — they can generally protect themselves.

When he was twenty, Pin-Too told him he could not teach him any more.

"It is time for you to go back to your parents, and comfort them in their old age," he said.

He looked very sorry as he said it, for Pei-Hang had been his favourite pupil.

"I will start to-morrow, Master," replied Pei-Hang, obediently. "I will leave the city by the Golden Bridge."

"No, you must go by the Indigo Bridge, for there you will meet your future wife," said Pin-Too.

"I was not thinking of a wife," observed Pei-Hang, with some dismay.

And Pin-Too wrinkled up his eyes and laughed.

"All the better!" he said. "Because, when you have once seen her, you will be able to think of nothing else."

It was very hot weather, and Pei-Hang ought to have started early in the morning; but he sat so long over his books the night before his journey that he fell fast asleep just before sunrise, and slept all through the coolest hours of the day.

When he awoke, the sun was blazing down upon the streets of Chang-ngan, and making the town like a furnace.

However, Pei-Hang took up his stick and set off, because he had promised his father and mother to start that day.

"I will rest a little at the Indigo Bridge, and walk on again in the cool of the evening," he said to himself.

But on the bridge he fell asleep again, so tired was he with the many sleepless nights he had spent in study.

While he slept he had a dream, in which a tall and beautiful maiden appeared to him, and showed him her right foot, round which a red cord was bound.

"What is the meaning of it?" asked Pei-Hang, who could hardly take his eyes away from her face to look at her foot.

"What is the meaning of the red cord around your foot, too?" replied the girl.

Then Pei-Hang glanced at his right foot, and saw that his foot and the girl's were tied together by the same thin red cord; and by this he knew that she must be his future wife.

"I have heard my mother say," he said, "that when a boy is born, the Fairy of the Moon ties an invisible red cord round his right foot, and the other end of the cord round the foot of the girl-baby whom he is to marry."

"That is quite true," said the maiden; "and *this* is an invisible cord to people who are awake. Now I will tell you my name, and remember it when you hear it again. It is Yun-Ying."

"And I will tell you mine," began Pei-Hang, but Yun-Ying stopped him, smiling.

"Ah, I know yours, and all about you," she said.

This surprised Pei-Hang very much; but he need not have been greatly astonished, for everyone in Chang-ngan knew that Pei-Hang was the handsomest and wisest and best loved pupil the wise Pin-Too had ever had.

And Yun-Ying lived quite close to the city, and had often seen Pei-Hang walking through the streets with his books.

When Pei-Hang awoke, he found, as she had said, that there was no red cord around his foot, and no fair maiden looking down at him, either.

"I wonder if she is real, or only a dream-maiden, after all," he said to himself.

But Yun-Ying was quite real; only her mother, who knew something of magic, had given her the power of stepping in and out of people's dreams just as she chose.

Pei-Hang got up and went on his way, thinking of Yun-Ying all the time.

It was still very hot, and he grew so thirsty that he went to a little hut by the roadside, and asked an old woman who was sitting in the doorway to give him a drink.

The old dame told her daughter to fill their best goblet with fresh spring water, and bring it out to the stranger; and when the daughter appeared, it was none other than Yun-Ying herself.

"Oh!" cried Pei-Hang, "I thought perhaps I should never see you again, and I have found you almost directly."

"And what is my name?" asked the girl, laughing.

"Yun-Ying," replied Pei-Hang. "Yun-Ying, Yun-Ying," he repeated, in a singing tone, just as he had been saying it all the time as he walked along, as if he loved the sound of it.

Yun-Ying was dressed in white underneath, but her over-dress was bright blue, embroidered with beautiful flowers which she had worked herself; and she stood in the door of the hut, with a peach tree in full bloom over her head, making such a picture of youth and loveliness that Pei-Hang's heart seemed to jump up into his throat, and beat there fast enough to choke him.

"Who are you? And how do you come to know Yun-Ying?" asked the old woman peering and blinking at him, with her hand over her eyes, to shade them from the sun.

And when she heard about the dream, and the red cord, and that Pei-Hang wanted to marry her daughter, she did not look at all pleased.

"If I had two daughters you might have one of them, and welcome," she grumbled.

For Pei-Hang was not by any means a bad match. His parents were well off, and he was their only child.

But Yun-Ying was a very pretty girl, and a mandarin of Chang-ngan was anxious to make her his wife.

"He is four times her age, it is true," said her mother, explaining this to Pei-Hang; "but he is very rich. All his dishes and plates are gold, and they say his drinking-cups are gold, set with diamonds."

"He is old and wrinkled, like a little brown monkey," said Yun-Ying. "*I* don't want to marry him! And, besides, the Fairy of the Moon did n't tie my foot to his."

"No, that 's true enough," sighed her mother.

She would have liked to tell Pei-Hang to go about his business, but she knew if the red cord had really been tied between his foot and Yun-Ying's, it would not be safe to do that.

"Come inside," she said at last; "I 'll see what I can promise."

The inside of the hut was fragrant with the scent of herbs which were strewn all over the floor, and on a wooden stool in the middle lay a broken pestle and mortar.

"Now," said Yun-Ying's mother, "on this stool I pound magic drugs given to me by the Genii; but my pestle and mortar is broken. I want a new one."

"That I can easily buy in Chang-ngan," replied Pei-Hang.

"No; for it is a pestle and mortar of jade, and you can only get one like it by going to the home of the Genii, which is on a mountain above the Lake of Gems. If you will do that, and bring it back to me, you shall marry Yun-Ying."

"Yes, I will do that," said Pei-Hang, after a moment's thought. "But I must see my parents first."

He had not the least idea where the home of the Genii was; but Yun-Ying took him out into the garden, and showed him, in the far distance, a range of snow-capped mountains, with one peak towering above the rest.

"That is Mount Sumi," she said, "and it is there the Genii live, sitting on the snow-peaks, and looking down at the Lake of Gems."

"But to reach it you must cross the Blue River, the White River, the Red River, and the Black River, which are all full of monstrous fishes. That is why my mother is sending you," sighed Yun-Ying. "She thinks you will never come back alive."

"I know how to swim," said Pei-Hang, "and fishes don't frighten me."

"Promise me you won't try to swim," said Yun-Ying, earnestly. "You would be devoured in a moment. Take this box with you. In it you will find six red seeds. Throw one into each river as you come to it, and it will shrink into a little brook, over which you can jump."

Pei-Hang opened the box, and saw inside six round, red seeds, each about the size of a pea; and he agreed to use them as Yun-Ying directed. Then he kissed her, and set out on his journey to Mount Sumi.

But on his way across the plain he passed through the town where his parents lived, and he went to see them, and told them all that had happened since he left Chang-ngan.

His mother, who was a very wise woman, as mothers generally are, told him the Genii would be angry if he turned their four great rivers into brooks, and would probably refuse to give him a pestle and mortar made of jade.

"I never thought of that," said Pei-Hang.

"Never mind," said his mother, "I will give you a box containing six white seeds. Cast one into each brook when you have crossed it on your way home, and the brook will expand into a river again."

Early the next morning Pei-Hang kissed her and went on his way.

He rested during the midday heat, and continued his journey when it grew cool again; and in this way, at the end of seven days, he came to the Blue River.

It was a quarter of a mile wide, and as blue as the sky of midsummer, and fishes were popping their heads out of the water in every direction. The head of every fish was twice as large as a football, and had two rows of teeth. But Pei-Hang threw a red seed into the waves which were lapping the shore, and in a moment, instead of the wide blue river, a little brook lay at his feet.

The huge fishes were changed into tiny creatures like tapdoles, and he hopped across the brook on one foot.

Soon afterward he came to the White River, which was half a mile wide, so rapid that it was covered with foam, like new milk, and full of immense sea serpents. "I shan't be able to hop over *this* on one foot," thought Pei-Hang, throwing his red seed into the water.

But to his surprise the White River shrank just as rapidly as the Blue River into a tiny rippling brook, with some wee wriggling eels at the bottom.

Pei-Hang leaped lightly over it, and walked a long way before he came in sight of the Red River.

This was three-quarters of a mile wide, and bright scarlet. It looked like a flood of melted sealing-wax, and a row of alligators, with their mouths wide open, stretched right across it like a bridge.

"Now for my little red seed!" said Pei-Hang, opening his box quite cheerfully.

The nearest alligator made a snap at the seed as it sank in the river, but he missed it, and the next minute he found himself no bigger than a lizard, sitting at the bottom of a stream not half a yard across. At the other side of it Pei-Hang was met by one of the Genii, who had come down from his snow-peak to see who it was that had dared to play such tricks with the three mighty rivers.

Pei-Hang showed him the round white seeds in his other box.

"It is all right," he said, "I can make them as large as they were before, on my way back. But first I must find the home of the Genii, and get a pestle and mortar of jade for my future mother-in-law to pound her magic drugs in."

"First you must cross the Black River," replied the Geni, with rather a scornful laugh. "It is a mile wide, and the fish in it are six yards long, and covered with spikes like porcupines."

"How did you get across?" inquired Pei-Hang.

"I? Oh, I can fly," said the Geni.

"And I can jump," retorted Pei-Hang, sturdily.

The Geni walked with him as far as the Black River, and when our hero saw the great waste of water as black as ink, stretching away in front of him, it must be confessed his heart sank a little.

But he took out his fourth seed, and watched it disappear beneath a coal-black wave.

In an instant, to the Geni's astonishment, the river dried up, leaving only a shallow stream running through the grass at their feet.

The Geni was not altogether a bad-hearted fellow, and he was also much impressed by the wonderful things Pei-Hang seemed able to do; so he offered to show him the nearest way to the home of the Genii, on the top of Mount Sumi.

After a long and wearisome climb they got up there, and found eight of the Genii sitting on eight snow-peaks, and looking down on the Lake of Gems, as Yun-Ying had said.

The Lake of Gems lay on the other side of Mount Sumi, and was a beautiful sheet of water, flashing all the colours of the rainbow.

Pei-Hang could not take his eyes off it. He forgot all about the pestle and mortar as he watched the waves rippling along the shore, and leaving behind them diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and pearls in thousands.

Every pebble on the margin of the lake was a precious stone, and Pei-Hang wanted to go down and fill his pockets with them.

He stood there while the Geni who had been his guide explained to the others why he had come, and told them about the wonderful red and white seeds he carried about with him.

"We must let him have the pestle and mortar," he said, "or he won't give us our rivers back again." The eight Genii nodded their eight heads, and spoke all at once, with a noise which was like the rumble of thunder among the hills. "Let him take it, if he can carry it," they said.

And they laughed until the snow-peaks shook beneath them; for the mortar made of jade was six feet high and four feet wide and the pestle was so heavy no mortal could lift it.

Pei-Hang, when he had finished staring at the Lake of Gems, walked round it, and wondered how he was to carry it down the mountain and across the plains to Chang-ngan.

Then he sat down on the ground to think the matter over, and the Genii, even his own good-natured Geni, laughed at him again.

"Come!" they said. "If you like to fill the mortar with precious stones, you may do it. Any man who can carry it empty can carry it full."

"Because no one can carry it at all," concluded the good-natured Geni, softly to himself.

Pei-Hang folded his arms, and sat still, and thought, and thought, and took no notice of their gibes and sneers.

He had not studied three years with the wisest man in Chang-ngan for nothing, and, besides, he was determined to marry Yun-Ying, and when young men are very much in love, they sometimes accomplish things which their friends — and enemies — think are impossible.

At last a light came into his eyes; and he jumped up and asked the friendly Geni if he would make a little heap of stones at one side of the mortar.

"I want to be able to look inside it, and I am not tall enough," said he.

"And why don't you do it yourself?" asked the Geni.

"Because I must go down to the Lake of Gems and collect precious stones," replied Pei-Hang.

And he ran down to the shore of the lake and gathered diamonds, rubies, emeralds, pearls, and sapphires, as many as he could carry.

This he did again and again, emptying them into the mortar each time, until it was quite full, and held gems enough to make Pei-Hang the richest man in China.

This was exactly what he wanted; for he knew that the yellow-faced mandarin was only the richest man in Chang-ngan, and that the richest man in China would have a far greater chance of marrying Yun-Ying.

"Well, what next?" cried the eight Genii, when he had finished. "Will you take it on your shoulder or on your head?"

"I will just carry it under my arm," replied Pei-Hang, easily.

And he took out his little box, and threw one of his red seeds on top of the gems.

In a moment the gigantic pestle and mortar shrank into one of the ordinary size.

Pei-Hang put the pestle in his pocket, and took up the mortar carefully, because he did not wish to spill the precious stones, and made a low bow to the Genii.

"Good-bye, and thank you," he said.

They did not laugh this time, but they pursued him with such a roar of rage that it sounded as if eight lions were waiting for their dinner.

But they did not dare to stop him, knowing that he had the power to turn the four brooks into four rivers again.

Pei-Hang hurried away, and on his journey did exactly what he had promised.

He jumped across the first brook, and threw a white seed into it, and turned it into a terrible inky black waste of waters a mile wide, full of fishes six yards long, and every fish covered with spikes.

The Genii stopped roaring then; they were relieved to see the Black River rolling once more between them and the outer world.

When Pei-Hang came to the Red River, and the White River, and the Blue River, he did the same thing; and from that day to this no one has been able to find the home of the Genii, because no one but Pei-Hang could ever cross the Blue River, much less the other three.

Then Pei-Hang journeyed for seven days, and came to his father's and mother's house, and told them all that had happened since he had left them, and he gave them a ruby, a diamond, an emerald, a sapphire, a pearl, and a pink topaz, a jewel for every white seed his mother had given him, and each as large as a sparrow's egg. After that he went on to Chang-ngan, and there he found that, although he had only been a month away, Yun-Ying's mother had told everyone he was dead, and invited all her friends to a wedding feast in honour of her daughter's marriage with the yellow-faced old mandarin. The wedding had not taken place when Pei-Hang arrived; but Yun-Ying stood under the peach tree, in her wedding dress, which was of pink silk, all embroidered with silver, and when she saw Pei-Hang, she threw herself into his arms and the tears ran down her cheeks.

Pei-Hang put down the pestle and mortar while he comforted her, and her mother came running out to look at it.

"You have come too late to marry Yun-Ying," she said.

"But I'll buy the pestle and mortar from you with some of the money the mandarin has given me."

"No, you will not," replied Pei-Hang. And he dropped one of his white seeds into the mortar, which at once increased in size until it filled the whole grass plat under the peach tree, and it was full to the brim of glittering jewels.

Pei-Hang climbed into one of the branches overhanging it, and from there he threw down among the wedding guests diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and all kinds of precious stones.

And the yellow-faced mandarin was as busy picking them up as anyone.

"Although he is so rich that his drinking-cups are made of gold!" cried the others, indignantly.

"One can never have too much of a good thing. He! he! he!" he chuckled.

And when Pei-Hang offered him three rubies, each as large as a pigeon's egg, if he would go away and forget all about Yun-Ying, he took them and went.

Perhaps he knew that Yun-Ying's mother would not have much more to say to him, now that she had a chance of a son-in-law who scattered jewels about the grass like pearl barley.

Or perhaps he really preferred the three great rubies to Yun-Ying.

At any rate, he went back to Chang-ngan, and Pei-Hang married Yun Ying, and took her away to the city where his father and mother lived; and they were as happy as two young people deserve to be when they love each other dearly.

As for the pestle and mortar of jade, it stood under the peach tree; and no one could lift it into the cottage, and no one could have pounded magic drugs in it, if they could have got it inside.

Pei-Hang had one red seed left in his box, and he meant to have thrown it into the mortar as soon as he had taken all the precious stones out, and made it small again.

But while he was up in the peach tree the box flew open, and the seed fell out, and was gobbled up by a turkey underneath.

The turkey, of course, changed into a bantam cock; but the pestle and mortar had to remain the size it was.

And Yun-Ying's mother was very angry about it, although I do not think she deserved anything else, after the unfair advantage she had tried to take of her son-in-law.

The Sea-Maiden

THERE was once a poor old fisherman, and one year he was not getting much fish. On a day of days, while he was fishing, there rose a sea-maiden at the side of his boat, and she asked him, "Are you getting much fish?" The old man answered and said, "Not I." "What reward would you give me for sending plenty of fish to you?" "Ach!" said the old man, "I have not much to spare." "Will you give me the first son you have?" said she. "I would give ye that, were I to have a son," said he. "Then go home, and remember me when your son is twenty years of age, and you yourself will get plenty of fish after this." Everything happened as the sea-maiden said, and he himself got plenty of fish; but when the end of the twenty years was nearing, the old man was growing more and more sorrowful and heavy-hearted, while he counted each day as it came.

He had rest neither day nor night. The son asked his father one day, "Is any one troubling you?" The old man said, "Someone is, but that's nought to do with you nor anyone else." The lad said, "I *must* know what it is." His father told him at last how the matter was with him and the sea-maiden. "Let not that put you in any trouble," said the son; "I will not oppose you." "You shall not; you shall not go, my son, though I never get fish any more." "If you will not let me go with you, go to the smithy, and let the smith make me a great strong sword, and I will go seek my fortune."

His father went to the smithy, and the smith made a doughty sword for him. His father came home with the sword. The lad grasped it and gave it a shake or two, and it flew into a hundred splinters. He asked his father to go to the smithy and get him another sword in which there should be twice as much weight; and so his father did, and so likewise it happened to the next sword — it broke in two halves. Back went the old man to the smithy; and the smith made a great sword; its like he never made before. "There 's the sword for thee," said the smith, "and the fist must be good that plays this blade." The old man gave the sword to his son; he gave it a shake or two. "This will do," said he; "it 's high time now to travel on my way."

On the next morning he put a saddle on a black horse that his father had, and he took the world for his pillow. When he went on a bit, he fell in with the carcass of a sheep beside the road. And there were a great black dog, a falcon, and an otter, and they were quarrelling over the spoil. So they asked him to divide it for them. He came down off the horse, and he divided the carcass amongst the three, three shares to the dog, two shares to the otter, and a share to the falcon. "For this," said the dog, "if swiftness of foot or sharpness of tooth will give thee aid, mind me, and I will be at thy side." Said the otter, "If the swimming of foot on the ground of a pool will loose thee, mind me, and I will be at thy side." Said the falcon, "If hardship comes on thee, where swiftness of wing or crook of claw will do good, mind me, and I will be at thy side."

On this he went onward till he reached a king's house, and he took service to be a herd, and his wages were to be according to the milk of the cattle. He went away with the cattle, and the grazing was but bare. In the evening when he took them home they had not much milk, the place was so bare, and his meat and drink was but spare that night.

On the next day he went farther on with them; and at last he came to a place exceedingly grassy, in a great glen, of which he never saw the like.

But about the time when he should drive the cattle homewards, whom should he see coming but a great giant with a sword in his hand? "HI! HO!! HOGARACH!!!" says the giant. "Those cattle are mine; they are on my land, and a dead man art thou." "I say not that," says the herd; "there is no knowing, but that may be easier to say than to do."

He drew the great clean-sweeping sword, and he neared the giant. The herd drew back his sword, and the head was off the giant in a twinkling. He leaped on the black horse, and he went to look for the giant's house. In went the herd, and that's the place where there was money in plenty, and dresses of each kind in the wardrobe with gold and silver, and each thing finer than the other. At the mouth of night he took himself to the king's house, but he took not a thing from the giant's house. And when the cattle were milked this night there *was* milk! He got good feeding this night, meat and drink without stint, and the king was hugely pleased that he had caught such a herd. He went on for a time in this way, but at last the glen grew bare of grass, and the grazing was not so good.

So he thought he would go a little farther forward in on the giant's land; and he sees a great park of grass. He returned for the cattle, and he put them into the park.

They were but a short time grazing in the park when a great wild giant came, full of rage and madness. "HI! HAW!! HOGARAICH!!!" said the giant; "it is a drink of thy blood that will quench my thirst this night." "There is no knowing," said the herd, "but that's easier to say than to do." And at each other went the men. *There* was shaking of blades! At length and at last it seemed as if the giant would get the victory over the herd. Then he called on the dog, and with one spring the black dog caught the giant by the neck, and swiftly the herd struck off his head.

He went home very tired this night, but it's a wonder if the king's cattle had not milk. The whole family was delighted that they had got such a herd.

Next day he betakes himself to the castle. When he reached the door, a little flattering carlin met him standing in the door. "All hail and good luck to thee, fisher's son! 't is I myself am pleased to see thee; great is the honour for this kingdom, for thy like to be come into it — thy coming in is fame for this little bothy; go in first; honour to the gentles; go in, and take breath."

"In before me, thou crone; I like not flattery out of doors; go in and let's hear thy speech." In went the crone, and when her back was to him he drew his sword and whips off her head; but the sword flew out of his hand. And swift the crone gripped her head with both hands, and put it on her neck as it was before. The dog sprang on the crone, and she struck the generous dog with the club of magic; and there he lay. But the herd struggled for a hold of the club of magic, and with one blow on the top of the head she was on earth in the twinkling of an eye. He went forward, up a little, and there was spoil! Gold and silver, and each thing more precious than another, in the crone's castle. He went back to the king's house, and there was rejoicing.

He followed herding in this way for a time; but one night after he came home, instead of getting "All hail!" and "Good luck!" from the dairymaid, all were at crying and woe.

He asked what cause of woe there was that night. The dairymaid said, "There is a great beast with three heads in the loch, and it must get someone every year, and the lot had come this year on the king's daughter, and at midday to-morrow she is to meet the Laidly Beast at the upper end of the loch, but there is a great suitor yonder who is going to rescue her."

"What suitor is that?" said the herd. "Oh, he is a great general of arms," said the dairymaid, "and when he kills the beast, he will marry the king's daughter, for the king has said that he who could save his daughter should get her to marry."

But on the morrow, when the time grew near, the king's daughter and this hero of arms went to give a meeting to the beast, and they reached the black rock at the upper end of the loch. They were but a short time there when the beast stirred in the midst of the loch; but when the general saw this terror of a beast with three heads, he took fright, and he slunk away, and he hid himself. And the king's daughter was under fear and under trembling, with no one at all to save her. Suddenly she sees a doughty, handsome youth, riding a black horse, and coming where she was. He was marvellously arrayed and full armed, and his black dog moved after him. "There is gloom on your face, girl," said the youth; "what do you here?"

"Oh! that's no matter," said the king's daughter. "It's not long I'll be here at all events."

"I say not that," said he.

"A champion fled as likely as you, and not long since," said she.

"He is a champion who stands the war," said the youth. And to meet the beast he went with his sword and his dog. But there was a spluttering and a splashing between himself and the beast! The dog kept doing all he might, and the king's daughter was palsied by fear of the noise of the beast! One of them would now be under, and now above. But at last he cut one of the heads off it. It gave one roar, and the son of earth, echo of the rocks, called to its screech, and it drove the loch in spindrift from end to end, and in a twinkling it went out of sight.

"Good luck and victory follow you, lad!" said the king's daughter. "I am safe for one night, but the beast will come again and again, until the other two heads come off it." He caught the beast's head, and he drew a knot through it, and he told her to bring it with her there to-morrow. She gave him a gold ring, and went home with the head on her shoulder, and the herd betook himself to the cows. But she had not gone far when this great general saw her, and he said to her, "I will kill you if you do not say 't was I took the head off the beast." "Oh!" says she, "'t is I will say it; who else took the head off the beast but you!" They reached the king's house, and the head was on the general's shoulder. But here was rejoicing, that she should come home alive and whole, and this great captain with the beast's head full of blood in hand. On the morrow they went away, and there was no question at all but that this hero would save the king's daughter.

They reached the same place, and they were not long there when the fearful Laidly Beast stirred in the midst of the loch, and the hero slunk away as he did on yesterdav: but it was not long after this when the man of the black horse came, with another dress on. No matter; she knew that it was the very same lad. "It is I am pleased to see you," said she. "I am in hopes you will handle your great sword to-day as you did yesterday. Come up and take breath." But they were not long there when they saw the beast steaming in the midst of the loch.

At once he went to meet the beast, but *there* was Cloopersteich and Clapersteich, spluttering, splashing, raving, and roaring on the beast! They kept at it thus for a long time, and about the mouth of the night he cut another head off the beast. He put it on the knot and gave it to her. She gave him one of her earrings, and he leaped on the black horse, and he betook himself to the herding. The king's daughter went home with the heads. The general met her, and took the heads from her, and he said to her that she must tell that it was he who took the head off of the beast this time also. "Who else took the head off the beast but you?" said she. They reached the king's house with the heads. Then there was joy and gladness.

About the same time on the morrow, the two went away. The officer hid himself as he usually did. The king's daughter betook herself to the bank of the loch. The hero of the black horse came, and if roaring and raving were on the beast on the days that were passed, this day it was horrible. But no matter, he took the third head off the beast, and drew it through the knot, and gave it to her. She gave him her other earring, and then she went home with the heads. When they reached the king's house, all were full of smiles, and the general was to marry the king's daughter the next day. The wedding was going on, and everyone about the castle longing till the priest should come. But when the priest came, she would marry only the one who could take the heads off the knot without cutting it. "Who should take the heads off the knot but the man that put the heads on?" said the king.

The general tried them, but he could not loose them, and at last there was no one about the house but had tried to take the heads off the knot, but they could not. The king asked if there was anyone else about the house that would try to take the heads off the knot. They said that the herd had not tried them yet. Word went for the herd; and he was not long throwing them hither and thither. "But stop a bit, my lad," said the king's daughter; "the man that took the heads off the beast, he has my ring and my two earrings." The herd put his hand in his pocket, and he threw them on the board. "Thou art my man," said the king's daughter. The king was not so pleased when he saw that it was a herd who was to marry his daughter, and he ordered that he should be put in a better dress; but his daughter spoke, and she said that he had a dress as fine as any that ever was in his castle; and thus it happened. The herd put on the giant's golden dress, and they were married that same day.

They were now married, and everything went on well. But one day, and it was the namesake of the day when his father had promised him to the sea-maiden, they were sauntering by the side of the loch, and lo, and behold! she came and took him away to the loch without leave or asking. The king's daughter was now mournful, tearful, blind-sorrowful for her married man; she was always with her eye on the loch. An old soothsayer met her, and she told how it had befallen her married mate. Then he told her the thing to do to save her mate, and that she did.

She took her harp to the sea-shore, and sat and played; and the sea-maiden came up to listen, for sea-maidens are fonder of music than all other creatures. But when the wife saw the sea-maiden she stopped. The sea-maiden said, "Play on!" but the princess said, "No, not till I see my man again." So the sea-maiden put up his head out of the loch.

Then the princess played again, and stopped till the sea-maiden put him up to the waist. Then the princess played and stopped again, and this time the sea-maiden put him all out of the loch, and he called on the falcon and became one, and flew on shore. But the sea-maiden took the princess, his wife.

Sorrowful was each one that was in the town on this night. Her man was mournful, tearful, wandering down and up about the banks of the loch, by day and night. The old soothsayer met him. The soothsayer told him that there was no way of killing the sea-maiden but the one way, and this is it: "In the island that is in the midst of the loch is the white-footed hind of the slenderest legs and the swiftest step, and though she be caught, there will spring a hoodie out of her, and though the hoodie should be caught, there will spring a trout out of her, but there is an egg in the mouth of the trout, and the soul of the sea-maiden is in the egg and if the egg breaks she is dead."

Now, there was no way of getting to this island, for the sea-maiden would sink each boat and raft that would go on the loch. He thought he would try to leap the strait with the black horse, and even so he did. The black horse leaped the strait. He saw the hind, and he let the black dog after her, but when he was on one side of the island, the hind would be on the other side. "Oh! would the black dog of the carcass of flesh were here!" No sooner spoke he the word than the grateful dog was at his side; and after the hind he went, and they were not long in bringing her to earth. But he no sooner caught her than a hoodie sprang out of her. "Would that the falcon grey, of sharpest eye and swiftest wing, were here!" No sooner said he this than the falcon was after the hoodie, and she was not long putting her to earth; and as the hoodie fell on the bank of the loch, out of her jumps the trout. "Oh! that thou wert by me now, O otter!" No sooner said than the otter was at his side, and out on the loch she leaped, and brings the trout from the midst of the loch; but no sooner was the otter on shore with the trout than the egg came from his mouth. He sprang and he put his foot on it. 'T was then that the sea-maiden appeared, and she said, "Break not the egg, and you shall get all you ask." "Deliver to me my wife!" In the wink of an eye she was by his side. When he got hold of her hand in both his hands, he let his foot down on the egg, and the sea-maiden died.

The Enchanted Waterfall

ONCE upon a time, there lived alone with his father and mother a simple young wood-cutter. He worked all day on the lonely hillside, or among the shady trees of the forest. But, work as hard as he might, he was still very poor, and could bring home but little money to his old father and mother. This grieved him very much, for he was an affectionate and dutiful son.

For himself he had but few wants and was easily pleased. His mother, too, was always cheerful and contented. The old father, however, was of a selfish disposition, and often grumbled at the poor supper of rice, washed down with weak tea, or, if times were very bad, with a cup of hot water.

"If we had but a little saké, now," he would say, "it would warm one up, and do one's heart good." And then he would reproach the simple young fellow, vowing that in his young days he had always been able to afford a cup of saké for himself and his friends.

Grieved at heart, the young man would work harder than ever and think to himself: "How shall I earn some more money? How shall I get a little saké for my poor father, who really needs it in his weakness and old age?"

He was thinking in this way to himself one day as he was at work on the wooded hills, when the sound of rushing water caught his ear. He had often worked in the same spot before, and could not remember that there was any torrent or waterfall near. So, feeling rather surprised, he followed the sound, which got louder and louder until at last he came upon a beautiful little cascade.

The water looked so clear and cool that he stooped down where it was flowing away in a quiet stream, and, using his hand as a cup, drank a little of it. What was his amazement to find that instead of water it was the most excellent saké!

Overjoyed at this discovery, he quickly filled the gourd which was hanging at his girdle, and made the best of his way home, rejoicing that now at last he had something good to bring back to his poor old father. The old man was so delighted with the saké that he drank cup after cup. A neighbour happened to drop in, the story was told to him, and a cup of saké offered and drunk with many words of astonishment and gratitude.

Soon the news spread through the village, and before night there was hardly a man in the place who had not paid his visit of curiosity, been told the tale of the magic fountain, and smelt the gourd, which, alas! was now empty.

Next morning the young wood-cutter set off to work earlier even than usual, not forgetting to carry with him a large gourd, for of course the enchanted waterfall was to be visited again.

What was the surprise of the young man when he came to the spot, to find several of his neighbours already there, and all armed with buckets, jars, pitchers, anything that would carry a good supply of the coveted saké. Each man had come secretly, believing that he alone had found his way to the magic waterfall.

The young wood-cutter was amused to see the looks of disappointment and anger upon the faces of those who already stood near the water, as they saw fresh arrivals every moment. Each one looked abashed and uncomfortable in the presence of his neighbours; but, at last, one bolder than the others broke the grim silence with a laugh, which soon the others were fain to join in.

"Here we are," said he, "all bent on the same errand. Let us fill our jars and gourds and go home. But first — just one taste of the magic saké." He stooped down and, filling his gourd, put it to his lips. Once and yet again did he drink, with a face of astonishment which soon gave place to anger.

"Water!" he shouted in a rage; "nothing but cold water! We have been tricked and deceived by a parcel of made-up stories — where is that young fellow? Let us duck him in his fine waterfall!"

But the young man had been wise enough to slip behind a big rock when he saw the turn things were taking, and was nowhere to be found.

First one and then another tasted of the stream. It was but too true; no saké, but clear, cold water was there. Crestfallen and out of temper, the covetous band returned to their homes.

When they were fairly gone the good young wood-cutter crept from his hiding-place. "Could this be true," he thought, "or was it all a dream? At any rate," said he, "I must taste once more for myself." He filled the gourd and drank. Sure enough, there was the same fine-flavoured saké he had tasted yesterday. And so it remained. To the good, dutiful son the cascade flowed with the finest saké, while to all others it yielded only cold water.

The emperor, hearing this wonderful story, sent for the good young wood-cutter, rewarded him for his kindness to his father, and even changed the name of the year in his honour as an encouragement to children in all future time to honour and obey their parents.

The Amadan of the Dough

THERE was a king, once on a time, that had a son that was an Amadan.* The Amadan's mother died, and the king married again.

The Amadan's stepmother was always afraid of his beating her children, he was growing so big and strong. So to keep him from growing and to weaken him, she had him fed on dough made of raw meal and water, and for that he was called "The Amadan of the Dough." But instead of getting weaker, it was getting stronger the Amadan was on this fare, and he was able to thrash all of his stepbrothers together.

At length his stepmother told his father that he would have to drive the Amadan away. The father consented to put him away; but the Amadan refused to go till his father would give him a sword so sharp that it would cut a pack of wool falling on it.

After a great deal of time and trouble the father got such a sword and gave it to the Amadan; and when the Amadan had tried it and found it what he wanted, he bade them all good-bye and set off.

For seven days and seven nights he travelled away before him without meeting anything wonderful, but on the seventh night he came up to a great castle. He went in and found no one there, but he found a great dinner spread on the table in the hall. So to be making the most of his time, down the Amadan sat at the table and whacked away.

When he had finished with his dinner, up to the castle came three young princes, stout, strong, able fellows, but very, very tired, and bleeding from wounds all over them.

They struck the castle with a flint, and all at once the whole castle shone as if it were on fire.

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* Simpleton.

The Amadan sprang at the three of them to kill them. He said, "What do you mean by putting the castle on fire?"

"O Amadan!" they said, "don't interfere with us, for we are nearly killed as it is. The castle isn't on fire. Every day we have to go out to fight three giants — Slat Mor, Slat Marr, and Slat Beag. We fight them all day long, and just as night is falling we have them killed. But however it comes, in the night they always come to life again, and if they didn't see this castle lit up, they'd come in on top of us and murder us while we slept. So every night when we come back from the fight, we light up the castle. Then we can sleep in peace until morning, and in the morning go off and fight the giants again."

When the Amadan heard this, he wondered; and he said he would like very much to help them kill the giants. They said they would be very glad to have such a fine fellow's help; and so it was agreed that the Amadan should go with them to the fight next day.

Then the three princes washed themselves and took their supper, and they and the Amadan went to bed.

In the morning all four of them set off, and travelled to the Glen of the Echoes, where they met the three giants.

"Now," says the Amadan, "if you three will engage the two smaller giants, Slat Marr and Slat Beag, I'll engage Slat Mor myself and kill him."

They agreed to this.

Now the smallest of the giants was far bigger and more terrible than anything ever the Amadan had seen or heard of in his life before, so you can fancy what Slat Mor must have been like.

But the Amadan was little concerned at this. He went to meet Slat Mor, and the two of them fell to the fight, and a great, great fight they had. They made the hard ground into soft, and the soft into spring wells; they made the rocks into pebbles, and the pebbles into gravel, and the gravel fell over the country like hailstones. All the birds of the air from the lower end of the world to the upper end of the world, and all the wild beasts and tame from the four ends of the earth, came flocking to see the fight; and in the end the Amadan ran Slat Mor through with his sword and laid him down dead.

Then he turned to help the three princes, and very soon he laid the other two giants down dead for them also.

Then the three princes said they would all go home. The Amadan told them to go, but warned them not to light up the castle this night, and said he would sit by the giants' corpses and watch if they came to life again.

The three princes begged of him not to do this, for the three giants would come to life, and then he, having no help, would be killed.

The Amadan was angry with them, and ordered them off instantly. Then he sat down by the giants' corpses to watch. But he was so tired from his great day's fighting that by and by he fell asleep.

About twelve o'clock at night, when the Amadan was sleeping soundly, up comes a *cailliach* [old hag] and four *badachs* [unwieldy big fellows], and the cailliach carried with her a feather and a bottle of *iocshlainte* [ointment of health], with which she began to rub the giants' wounds.

Two of the giants were already alive when the Amadan awoke, and the third was just opening his eyes. Up sprang the Amadan, and at him leaped they all — Slat Mor, Slat Marr, Slat Beag, the cailliach, and the four badachs.

If the Amadan had had a hard fight during the day, this one was surely ten times harder. But a brave and a bold fellow he was, and not to be daunted by numbers of showers of blows. They fought for long and long. They made the hard ground into soft, and the soft into spring wells; they made the rocks into pebbles, and the pebbles into gravel, and the gravel fell over the country like hailstones. All the birds of the air from the lower end of the world to the upper end of of the world, and all the wild beasts and tame from the four ends of the earth, came flocking to see the fight; and one after the other of them the Amadan ran his sword through, until he had every man of them stretched on the ground, dying or dead.

And when the old cailliach was dying, she called the Amadan to her and put him under *geasa* [an obligation that he could not shirk] to lose the power of his feet, of his strength, of his sight, and of his memory, if he did not go to meet and fight the Black Bull of the Brown Wood.

When the old hag died outright, the Amadan rubbed some of the iocshlainte to his wounds with the feather, and at once he was as hale and as fresh as when the fight began. Then he took the feather and the bottle of iocshlainte, buckled on his sword, and started away before him to fulfil his geasa.

He travelled for the length of that lee-long day, and when night was falling, he came to a little hut on the edge of a wood; and the hut had no shelter inside or out but one feather over it, and there was a rough, red woman standing in the door.

"You 're welcome!" says she, "Amadan of the Dough, the king of Ireland's son. What have you been doing and where are you going?"

"Last night," says the Amadan, "I fought a great fight, and killed Slat Mor, Slat Marr, Slat Beag, the Cailliach of the Rocks, and four badachs. Now I 'm under geasa to meet and to fight the Black Bull of the Brown Wood. Can you tell me where to find him?"

"I can that," says she, "but it 's now night. Come in and eat and sleep."

So she spread for the Amadan a fine supper, and made a soft bed, and he ate heartily and slept heartily that night.

In the morning she called him early, and she directed him on his way to meet the Black Bull of the Brown Wood. "But, my poor Amadan," she said, "no one has ever yet met that bull and come back alive."

She told him that when he reached the place of meeting, the bull would come tearing down the hill like a hurricane.

"Here 's a cloak," says she, "to throw upon the rock that is standing there. You hide yourself behind the rock, and when the bull comes tearing down, he will dash at the cloak, and blind himself with the crash against the rock. Then you jump on the bull's back and fight for life. If, after the fight, you are living, come back and see me; and if you are dead, I 'll go and see you."

The Amadan took the cloak, thanked her and set off, and travelled on and on until he came to the place of meeting.

When the Amadan came there, he saw the Bull of the Brown Wood come tearing down the hill like a hurricane, and he threw the cloak on the rock and hid behind it, and with the fury of his dash against the cloak the bull blinded himself, and the roar of his fury split the rock.

The Amadan lost no time jumping on his back, and with his sword began hacking and slashing him; but he was no easy bull to conquer, and a great fight the Amadan had. They made the hard ground into soft, and the soft into spring wells; they made the rocks into pebbles, and the pebbles into gravel, and the gravel fell over the country like hailstones. All the birds of the air from the lower end of the world to the upper end of the world, and all the wild beasts and tame from the four ends of the earth, came flocking to see the fight; at length, after a long time, the Amadan ran his sword right through the bull's heart, and the bull fell down dead. But before he died he put the Amadan under geasa to meet and to fight the White Wether of the Hill of the Waterfalls.

Then the Amadan rubbed his own wounds with the ioc-shlainte, and he was as fresh and hale as when he went into the fight. Then he set out and travelled back again to the little hut that had no shelter without or within, only one feather over it, and the rough, red woman was standing in the door, and she welcomed the Amadan and asked him the news.

He told her all about the fight, and that the Black Bull of the Woods had put him under geasa to meet and to fight the White Wether of the Hill of the Waterfalls.

"I 'm sorry for you, my poor Amadan," says she, "for no one ever met before that White Wether and came back alive. But come in and eat and rest, anyhow, for you must be both hungry and sleepy."

So she spread him a hearty meal and made him a soft bed, and the Amadan ate and slept heartily; and in the morning she directed him to where he would meet the White Wether of the Hill of the Waterfalls. And she told him that no steel was tougher than the hide of the White Wether, that a sword was never yet made that could go through it, and that there was only one place — a little white spot just over the wether's heart — where he could be killed or sword could cut through. And she told the Amadan that his only chance was to hit this spot.

The Amadan thanked her, and set out. He travelled away and away before him until he came to the Hill of the Waterfalls, and as soon as he reached it he saw the White Wether coming tearing toward him in a furious rage, and the earth he was throwing up with his horns was shutting out the sun.

And when the wether came up and asked the Amadan what great feats he had done that made him impudent enough to dare to come there, the Amadan said: "With this sword I have killed Slat Mor, Slatt Marr, Slatt Beag, the Cailliach of the Rocks and her four badachs, and likewise the Black Bull of the Brown Wood."

"Then," said the White Wether, "you 'll never kill any other." And at the Amadan he sprang.

The Amadan struck at him with his sword, and the sword glanced off as it might off steel. Both of them fell to the fight with all their hearts, and such a fight never was before or since. They made the hard ground into soft, and the soft into spring wells; they made the rocks into pebbles, and the pebbles into gravel, and the gravel fell over the country like hailstones. All the birds of the air from the lower end of the world to the upper end of the world, and all the wild beasts and tame from the four ends of the earth, came flocking to see the fight. But at length and at last, after a long and terrible fight, the Amadan, seeing the little spot above the heart that the red woman had told him of, struck for it and hit it, and drove his sword through the White Wether's heart, and he fell down. And when he was dying, he called the Amadan and put him under a geasa to meet and fight the Beggarman of the King of Sweden.

The Amadan took out his bottle of iocshlainte and rubbed himself with the iocshlainte, and he was as fresh and hale as when he began the fight. Then he set out again, and when night was falling, he reached the hut that had no shelter within or without, only one feather over it, and the rough, red woman was standing in the door.

Right glad she was to see the Amadan coming back alive, and she welcomed him heartily and asked him the news.

He told her of the wonderful fight he had had, and that he was now under geasa to meet and fight the Beggarman of the King of Sweden.

She made him come in and eat and sleep, for he was tired and hungry. And heartily the Amadan ate and heartily he slept; and in the morning she called him early, and directed him on his way to meet the Beggarman of the King of Sweden.

She told him that when he reached a certain hill, the beggarman would come down from the sky in a cloud; and that he would see the whole world between the beggarman's legs and nothing above his head. "If ever he finds himself beaten," she said, "he goes up into the sky in a mist and stays there to refresh himself. You may let him go up once; but if you let him go up the second time, he will surely kill you when he comes down. Remember that. If you are alive when the fight is over, come to see me. If you are dead, I will go to see you."

The Amadan thanked her, parted with her, and travelled away and away before him until he reached the hill which she had told him of. And when he came there, he saw a great cloud that shot out of the sky, descending on the hill, and when it came down on the hill and melted away, there it left the Beggarman of the King of Sweden standing, and between his legs the Amadan saw the whole world and nothing over his head.

And with a roar and a run the beggarman made for the Amadan, and the roar of him rattled the stars in the sky. He asked the Amadan who he was, and what he had done to have the impudence to come there and meet him.

The Amadan said: "They call me the Amadan of the Dough, and I have killed Slat Mor, Slat Marr, Slat Beag, the Cailliach of the Rocks and her four badachs, the Black Bull of the Brown Wood, and the White Wether of the Hill of the Waterfalls, and before night I 'll have killed the Beggarman of the King of Sweden."

"That you never will, you miserable object," says the beggarman. "You 're going to die now, and I 'll give you your choice to die either by a hard squeeze of wrestling, or a stroke of the sword."

"Well," says the Amadan, "if I have to die, I 'd sooner die by a stroke of the sword."

"All right," says the beggarman, and drew his sword.

But the Amadan drew his sword at the same time, and both went at it. And if his fights before had been hard, this one was harder and greater and more terrible than the others put together. They made the hard ground into soft, and the soft into spring wells; they made the rocks into pebbles, and the pebbles into gravel, and the gravel fell over the country like hailstones. All the birds of the air from the lower end of the world to the upper end of the world, and all the wild beasts and tame from the four ends of the earth, came flocking to see the fight. And at length the fight was putting so hard upon the beggarman, and he was getting so weak, that he whistled, and the mist came around him, and he went up into the sky before the Amadan knew. He remained there until he refreshed himself, and then came down again, and at it again he went for the Amadan, and fought harder and harder than before, and again it was putting too hard upon him, and he whistled as before for the mist to come down and take him up.

But the Amadan remembered what the red woman had warned him; he gave one leap into the air, and coming down, drove his sword through the beggarman's heart, and the beggarman fell dead. But before he died he put geasa on the Amadan to meet and fight the Silver Cat of the Seven Glens.

The Amadan rubbed his wounds with the iocshlainte, and he was as fresh and hale as when he began the fight; and then he set out, and when night was falling, he reached the hut that had no shelter within or without, only one feather over it, and the rough, red woman was standing in the door.

Right glad she was to see the Amadan coming back alive, and she welcomed him right heartily, and asked him the news.

He told her that he had killed the beggarman, and said he was now under geasa to meet and fight the Silver Cat of the Seven Glens.

"Well," she said, "I 'm sorry for you, for no one ever before went to meet the Silver Cat and came back alive. But," she says, "you 're both tired and hungry; come in and rest and sleep."

So in the Amadan went, and had a hearty supper and a soft bed; and in the morning she called him up early, and she gave him directions where to meet the cat and how to find it. and she told him there was only one vital spot on that cat, and it was a black speck on the bottom of the cat's stomach, and unless he could happen to run his sword right through this, the cat would surely kill him. She said:

"My poor Amadan, I 'm very much afraid you 'll not come back alive. I cannot go to help you myself, or I would; but there is a well in my garden, and by watching that well I will know how the fight goes with you. While there is honey on top of the well, I will know you are getting the better of the cat; but if the blood comes on top, then the cat is getting the better of you; and if the blood stays there, I will know, my poor Amadan, that you are dead."

The Amadan bade her good-bye, and set out to travel to where the Seven Glens met at the sea. Here there was a precipice, and under the precipice a cave. In this cave the Silver Cat lived, and once a day she came out to sun herself on the rocks.

The Amadan let himself down over the precipice by a rope, and he waited until the cat came out to sun herself.

When the cat came out at twelve o'clock and saw the Amadan, she let a roar out of her that drove the waters back of the sea and piled them up a quarter of a mile high, and she asked him who he was and how he had the impudence to come there to meet her.

The Amadan said: "They call me the Amadan of the Dough, and I have killed Slat Mor, Slat Marr, Slat Beag, the Cailliach of the Rocks and her four badachs, the Black Bull of the Brown Woods, the White Wether of the Hill of the Waterfalls, and the Beggarman of the King of Sweden, and before night I will have killed the Silver Cat of the Seven Glens."

"That you never will," says she, "for a dead man you will be yourself." And at him she sprang.

But the Amadan raised his sword and struck at her, and both of them fell to the fight, and a great, great fight they had. They made the hard ground into soft, and the soft into spring wells; they made the rocks into pebbles, and the pebbles into gravel, and the gravel fell over the country like hailstones. All the birds of the air from the lower end of the world to the upper end of the world, and all the wild beasts and tame from the four ends of the earth, came flocking to see the fight; and if the fights that the Amadan had had on the other days were great and terrible, this one was far greater and far more terrible than all the others put together, and the poor Amadan sorely feared that before night fell he would be a dead man.

The red woman was watching at the well in her garden, and she was sorely distressed, for though at one time the honey was uppermost, at another time it was all blood, and again the blood and the honey would be mixed; so she felt bad for the poor Amadan.

At length the blood and the honey got mixed again, and it remained that way until night; so she cried, for she believed the Amadan himself was dead, as well as the Silver Cat.

And so he was. For when the fight had gone on for long and long, the cat, with a great long nail which she had in the end of her tail, tore him open from his mouth to his toes; and as she tore the Amadan open and he was about to fall, she opened her mouth so wide that the Amadan saw down to the very bottom of her stomach, and there he saw the black speck that the red woman had told him of. And just before he dropped he drove his sword through this spot, and the Silver Cat, too, fell over dead.

It was not long now till the red woman arrived at the place and found both the Amadan and the cat lying side by side, dead. At this the poor woman was frantic with sorrow, but suddenly she saw by the Amadan's side the bottle of iocshlainte and the feather. She took them up and rubbed the Amadan with the iocshlainte, and he jumped to his feet, alive and well, and fresh as when he began the fight.

He smothered her with kisses and drowned her with tears. He took the red woman with him, and set out on his journey back, and travelled and travelled on and on till he came to the Castle of Fire.

Here he met the three young princes, who were now living happily with no giants to molest them. They had one sister, the most beautiful young maiden that the Amadan had ever beheld. They gave her to the Amadan in marriage, and gave her half of all they owned for fortune.

The marriage lasted nine days and nine nights. There were nine hundred fiddlers, nine hundred fluters, and nine hundred pipers, and the last day and night of the wedding were better than the first.

The Rakshas's Palace

ONCE upon a time there lived a Rajah who was left a widower with two little daughters. Not very long after his first wife died he married again, and his second wife did not care for her stepchildren, and was often unkind to them; and the Rajah, their father, never troubled himself to look after them, but allowed his wife to treat them as she liked. This made the poor girls very miserable, and one day one of them said to the other, "Don't let us remain any longer here; come away into the jungle, for nobody here cares whether we go or stay." So they both walked off into the jungle, and lived for many days on the jungle fruits. At last, after they had wandered on for a long while, they came to a fine palace which belonged to a Rakshas, but both the Rakshas and his wife were out when they got there. Then one of the Princesses said to the other, "This fine palace, in the midst of the jungle, can belong to no one but a Rakshas, but the owner has evidently gone out; let us go in and see if we can find anything to eat." So they went into the Rakshas's house, and finding some rice, boiled, and ate it. Then they swept the room and arranged all the furniture in the house tidily. But hardly had they finished doing so when the Rakshas and his wife returned home. Then the two Princesses were so frightened that they ran up to the top of the house and hid themselves on the flat roof, from whence they could look down on one side into the inner courtyard of the house, and from the other could see the open country. The house-top was a favourite resort of the Rakshas and his wife. Here they would sit upon the hot summer evenings; here they winnowed the grain and hung out the clothes to dry; and the two Princesses found a sufficient shelter behind some sheaves of corn that were waiting to be threshed. When the Rakshas came into the house, he looked round and said to his wife, "Somebody has been arranging the house; everything in it is so clean and tidy. Wife, did you do this?" "No," she said; "I don't know who can have done all this." "Someone also has been sweeping the courtyard," continued the Rakshas. "Wife, did you sweep the courtyard?" "No," she answered; "I did not do it. I don't know who did." Then the Rakshas walked round and round several times with his nose up in the air, saying, "Someone is here now. I smell flesh and blood! Where can they be?" "Stuff and nonsense!" cried his wife; "you smell blood indeed! Why, you have just been killing and eating a hundred thousand people. I should wonder if you didn't still smell flesh and blood!" They went on quarrelling thus until the Rakshas said, "Well, never mind; I don't know how it is, but I'm very thirsty; let's come and drink some water." So both the Rakshas and his wife went to a well which was close to the house, and began letting down jars into it, and drawing up the water and drinking it. And the Princesses, who were on the top of the house, saw them. Now the youngest of the two Princesses was a very wise girl, and when she saw the Rakshas and his wife by the well, she said to her sister, "I will do something now that will be good for us both"; and, running down quickly from the top of the house, she crept close behind the Rakshas and his wife as they stood on tip-toe more than half over the side of the well, and, catching hold of one of the Rakshas's heels and one of his wife's, gave each a little push, and down they both tumbled into the well and were drowned — the Rakshas and the Rakshas's wife! The Princess then returned to her sister and said, "I have killed the Rakshas." "What! both?" cried her sister. "Yes, both," she said. "Won't they come back?" said her sister. "No, never," answered she.

The Rakshas being thus killed, the two Princesses took possession of the house, and lived there very happily for a long time. In it they found heaps and heaps of rich clothes and jewels, and gold and silver, which the Rakshas had taken from people he had murdered; and all round the house were folds for the flocks and sheds for the herds of cattle which the Rakshas owned. Every morning the youngest Princess used to drive out the flocks and herds to pasturage, and return home with them every night, while the eldest stayed at home, cooked the dinner and kept the house; and the youngest Princess, who was the cleverest, would often say to her sister, on going away for the day, "Take care, if you see any stranger (be it man, woman or child) come by the house, to hide, if possible, that nobody may know of our living here; and if anyone should call out and ask for a drink of water, or any poor beggar pray for food, before you give it to him be sure you put on ragged clothes and cover your face with charcoal, and make yourself look as ugly as possible, lest, seeing how fair you are, he should steal you away, and we never meet again." "Very well," the other Princess would answer, "I will do as you advise."

But a long time passed, and no one ever came by that way. At last one day, after the youngest Princess had gone out, a young Prince, the son of a neighbouring Rajah, who had been hunting with his attendants for many days in the jungles, came near the place, for he and his people were tired with hunting, and had been seeking all through the jungle for a stream of water, but could find none. When the Prince saw the fine palace standing by itself, he was very much astonished, and said, "It is a strange thing that any one should have built such a house as this in the depths of the forest. Let us go in; the owners will doubtless give us a drink of water." "No, no, do not go," cried his attendants; "this is most likely the house of a Rakshas." "We can but see," answered the Prince. "I should scarcely think anything very terrible lived here, for there is not a sound stirring nor a living creature to be seen." So he began tapping at the door, which was bolted, and crying, "Will whoever owns this house give me and my people some water to drink, for the sake of kind charity?" But nobody answered, for the Princess, who heard him, was busy up in her room, blacking her face with charcoal and covering her rich dress with rags. Then the Prince got impatient and shook the door angrily, saying, "Let me in, whoever you are! If you don't, I 'll force the door open." At this the poor little Princess got dreadfully frightened; and having blacked her face and made herself look as ugly as possible, she ran downstairs with a pitcher of water, and unbolting the door, gave the Prince the pitcher to drink from; but she did not speak, for she was afraid. Now, the Prince was a very clever man, and as he raised the pitcher to his mouth to drink the water, he thought to himself, "This is a very strange-looking creature who has brought me this jug of water. She would be pretty, but that her face seems to want washing, and her dress also is very untidy. What can that black stuff be on her face and hands? It looks very unnatural." And so thinking to himself, instead of drinking the water, he threw it in the Princess's face! The Princess started back with a little cry, while the water, trickling down, washed off the charcoal, and showed her delicate features and beautiful, fair complexion. The Prince caught hold of her hand, and said, "Now, tell me true, who are you? where do you come from? Who are your father and mother? and why are you here alone by yourself in the jungle? Answer me, or I 'll cut your head off." And he made as if he would draw his sword. The Princess was so terrified she could hardly speak, but as best she could she told how she was the daughter of a Rajah, and had run away into the jungle because of her cruel stepmother, and, finding the house, had lived there ever since; and having finished her story, she began to cry. Then the Prince said to her, "Pretty lady, forgive me for my roughness; do not fear. I will take you home with me, and you shall be my wife." But the more he spoke to her the more frightened she got, so frightened that she did not understand what he said, and could do nothing but cry. Now she had said nothing to the Prince about her sister, nor even told him that she had one, for she thought, "This man says he will kill me; if he hears that I have a sister, he will kill her, too." So the Prince, who was really kind-hearted, and would never have thought of separating the two little sisters who had been together so long, knew nothing at all of the matter, and only seeing she was too much alarmed even to understand gentle words, said to his servants, "Place this lady in one of the palkees, and let us set off home." And they did so. When the Princess found herself shut up in the palkee, and being carried she knew not where, she thought how terrible it would be for her sister to return home and find her gone, and determined, if possible, to leave some sign to show her which way she had been taken. Round her neck were many strings of pearls. She untied them, and tearing her saree into little bits, tied one pearl in each piece of the saree, that it might be heavy enough to fall straight to the ground; and so she went on, dropping one pearl and then another and another and another, all the way she went along, until they reached the palace where the Rajah and Ranee, the Prince's father and mother lived. She threw the last remaining pearl down just as she reached the palace gate. The old Rajah and Ranee were delighted to see the beautiful Princess their son had brought home; and when they heard her tale they said, "Ah, poor thing! what a sad story! but now she has come to live with us, we will do all we can to make her happy." And they married her to their son with great pomp and ceremony, and gave her rich dresses and jewels, and were very kind to her. But the Princess remained sad and unhappy, for she was always thinking about her sister, and yet she could not summon courage to beg the Prince or his father to send and fetch her to the palace.

Meantime, the younger Princess, who had been out with her flocks and herds when the Prince took her sister away, had returned home. When she came back she found the door wide open and no one standing there. She thought it very odd, for her sister always came every night to the door to meet her on her return. She went upstairs; her sister was not there; the whole house was empty and deserted. There she must stay all alone, for the evening had closed in, and it was impossible to go outside and seek her with any hope of success. So all the night long she waited, crying, "Someone has been here, and they have stolen her away; they have stolen my darling away! Oh, sister! sister!" Next morning, very early, going out to continue the search, she found one of the pearls belonging to her sister's necklace tied up in a small piece of saree; a little farther on lay another, and yet another, all along the road the Prince had gone. Then the Princess understood that her sister had left this clue to guide her on her way, and she at once set off to find her again. Very, very far she went — a six months' journey through the jungle, for she could not travel fast, the many days' walking tired her so much — and sometimes it took her two or three days to find the next piece of saree with the pearl. At last she came near a large town, to which it was evident her sister had been taken. Now, this young Princess was very beautiful indeed — as beautiful as she was wise — and when she got near the town she thought to herself, "If people see me, they may steal me away, as they did my sister, and then I shall never find her again. I will therefore disguise myself." As she was thus thinking she saw by the side of the road the corpse of a poor old beggar woman, who had evidently died from want and poverty. The body was shrivelled up, and nothing of it remained but the skin and bones. The Princess took the skin and washed it, and drew it on over her own lovely face and neck, as one draws a glove on one's hand. Then she took a long stick and began hobbling along, leaning on it, toward the town. The old woman's skin was all crumpled and withered, and people who passed by only thought, "What an ugly old woman!" and never dreamed of the false skin and the beautiful girl inside. So on she went, picking up the pearls — one here, one there — until she found the last pearl just in front of the palace gate. Then she felt certain her sister must be somewhere near, but where she did not know. She longed to go into the palace and ask for her, but no guards would have let such a wretched-looking old woman enter, and she did not dare offer them any of the pearls she had with her, lest they should think she was a thief. So she determined merely to remain as close to the palace as possible, and wait till fortune favoured her with the means of learning something further about her sister. Just opposite the palace was a small house belonging to a farmer, and the Princess went up to it and stood by the door. The farmer's wife saw her and said, "Poor old woman, who are you? What do you want? Why are you here? Have you no friends?" "Alas, no!" answered the Princess. "I am a poor old woman, and have neither father nor mother, son nor daughter, sister nor brother, to take care of me; all are gone, and I can only beg my bread from door to door."

"Do not grieve, good mother," answered the farmer's wife, kindly. "You may sleep in the shelter of our porch, and I will give you some food." So the Princess stayed there for that night and for many more; and every day the good farmer's wife gave her food. But all this time she could learn nothing of her sister.

Now there was a large tank near the palace, on which grew some fine lotus plants, covered with rich crimson lotuses — the royal flower — and of these the Rajah was very fond indeed, and prized them very much. To this tank (because it was the nearest to the farmer's house) the Princess used to go every morning, very early, almost before it was light, at about three o'clock, and take off the old woman's skin and wash it, and hang it out to dry, and wash her face and hands, and bathe her feet in the cool water, and comb her beautiful hair. Then she would gather a lotus flower (such as she had been accustomed to wear in her hair from a child) and put it on, so as to feel for a few minutes like herself again! Thus she would amuse herself. Afterward, as soon as the wind had dried the old woman's skin, she put it on again, threw away the lotus flower, and hobbled back to the farmer's door before the sun was up.

After a time the Rajah discovered that someone had plucked some of his favourite lotus flowers. People were set to watch, and all the wise men in the kingdom put their heads together to try to discover the thief, but without avail. At last, the excitement about this matter being very great, the Rajah's second son, a brave and noble young prince (brother to him who had found the eldest Princess in the forest) said, "I will certainly discover this thief." It chanced that several fine trees grew around the tank. Into one of these the young Prince climbed one evening (having made a sort of light thatched roof across two of the boughs, to keep off the heavy dews), and there he watched all the night through, but with no more success than his predecessors. There lay the lotus plants, still in the moonlight, without so much as a thieving wind coming to break off one of the flowers. The Prince began to get very sleepy, and thought the delinquent, whoever he might be, could not intend to return, when, in the very early morning, before it was light, who should come down to the tank but an old woman he had often seen near the palace gate? "Aha!" thought the Prince, "this, then, is the thief; but what can this queer old woman want with lotus flowers?" Imagine his astonishment when the old woman sat down on the steps of the tank and began pulling the skin off her face and arms, and from underneath the shrivelled yellow skin came the loveliest face he had ever beheld! So fair, so fresh, so young, so gloriously beautiful, that, appearing thus suddenly, it dazzled the Prince's eyes like a flash of golden lightning. "Ah," thought he, "can this be a woman or a spirit? a devil or an angel in disguise?"

The Princess twisted up her glossy black hair, and, plucking a red lotus, placed it in it, and dabbled her feet in the water, and amused herself by putting round her neck a string of pearls that had been her sister's necklace. Then, as the sun was rising, she threw away the lotus, and covering her face and arms again with the withered skin, went hastily away. When the Prince got home, the first thing he said to his parents was, "Father! mother! I should like to marry that old woman who stands all day at the farmer's gate, just opposite!" "What!" they cried, "the boy is mad! Marry that skinny old thing! You cannot — you are a King's son. Are there not enough Queens and Princesses in the world, that you should wish to marry a wretched old beggar-woman?" But he answered, "Above all things I should like to marry that old woman.

You know that I have ever been a dutiful and obedient son. In this matter, I pray you, grant me my desire." Then, seeing he was really in earnest about the matter, and that nothing they could say would alter his mind, they listened to his urgent entreaties — not, however, without much grief and vexation — and sent out the guards, to fetch the old woman (who was really the Princess in disguise) to the palace, where she was to be married to the Prince as privately and with as little ceremony as possible, for the family was ashamed of the match.

As soon as the wedding was over, the Prince said to his wife, "Gentle wife, tell me how much longer you intend to wear that old skin? You had better take it off; do be so kind." The Princess wondered how he knew of her disguise, or whether it was only a guess of his; and she thought, "If I take this ugly skin off, my husband will think me pretty, and shut me up in the palace and never let me go away, so that I shall not be able to find my sister again. No, I had better not take it off." So she answered, "I don't know what you mean. I am as all these years have made me; nobody can change his skin." Then the Prince pretended to be very angry, and said, "Take off that hideous disguise this instant, or I'll kill you." But she only bowed her head, saying, "Kill me then, but nobody can change his skin." And all this she mumbled as if she were a very old woman indeed, and had lost all her teeth and could not speak plain. At this the Prince laughed very much to himself, and thought, "I'll wait and see how long this freak lasts." But the Princess continued to keep on the old woman's skin; only every morning, at about three o'clock, before it was light, she would get up and wash it and put it on again. Then, some time afterward, the Prince, having found this out, got up softly one morning early, and followed her to the next room, where she had washed the skin and placed it on the floor to dry, and stealing it, he ran away with it and threw it on the fire. So the Princess, having no old woman's skin to put on, was obliged to appear in her own likeness. As she walked forth, very sad at missing her disguise, her husband ran to meet her, smiling and saying, "How do you do, my dear? Where is your skin now? Can't you take it off, dear?" Soon the whole palace had heard the joyful news of the beautiful young wife that the Prince had won; and all the people, when they saw her, cried, "Why, she is exactly like the beautiful Princess our young Rajah married, the jungle lady." The old Rajah and Ranee were prouder than all of their daughter-in-law, and took her to introduce her to their eldest son's wife Then no sooner did the Princess enter her sister-in-law's room then she saw that in her she had found her lost sister, and they ran into each other's arms. Great then, was the joy of all, but the happiest of all these happy people were the two Princesses.

Billy Beg and the Bull

ONCE upon a time when pigs were swine, there was a King and Queen, and they had one son, Billy, and the Queen gave Billy a bull that he was very fond of, and it was just as fond of him. After some time the Queen died, and she put it as her last request on the King that he would never part Billy and the bull, and the King promised that come what might, come what may, he would not. After the Queen died the King married again, and the new Queen did n't take to Billy Beg, and no more did she like the bull, seeing himself and Billy so *thick*. But she couldn't get the King on no account to part Billy and the Bull, so she consulted with a hen-wife what they could do as regards separating Billy and the bull. "What will you give me," says the hen-wife, "and I 'll very soon part them?" "Whatever you ask," says the Queen. "Well and good then," says the hen-wife; "you are to take to your bed, making pretend that you are bad with a complaint, and I 'll do the rest of it." And, well and good, to her bed she took, and none of the doctors could do anything for her, or make out what was her complaint. So the Queen asked for the hen-wife to be sent for. And sent for she was, and when she came in and examined the Queen, she said there was one thing, and only one, could cure her. The King asked what was that, and the hen-wife said it was three mouthfuls of the blood of Billy Beg's bull. But the King wouldn't on no account hear of this, and the next day the Queen was worse, and the third day she was worse still, and told the King she was dying, and he 'd have her death on his head. So, sooner nor this, the King had to consent to Billy Beg's bull being killed. When Billy heard this he got very down in the heart entirely, and he went doitherin' about, and the bull saw him, and asked him what was wrong with him that he was so mournful; so Billy told the bull what was wrong with him, and the bull told him to never mind, but keep up his heart, the Queen would never taste a drop of his blood. The next day, then, the bull was to be killed, and the Queen got up and went out to have the delight of seeing his death. When the bull was led up to be killed, says he to Billy, "Jump up on my back till we see what kind of a horseman you are." Up Billy jumped on his back, and with that the bull leapt nine mile high, nine mile deep, and nine mile broad, and came down with Billy sticking between his horns. Hundreds were looking on dazed at the sight, and through them the bull rushed, and over the top of the Queen, killing her dead, and away he galloped where you would n't know day by night, or night by day, over high hills, low hills, sheep-walks, and bullock-traces, the Cove of Cork, and old Tom Fox with his bugle horn. When at last they stopped, "Now then," says the bull to Billy, "you and I must undergo great scenery, Billy. Put your hand," says the bull, "in my left ear, and you 'll get a napkin, that, when you spread it out, will be covered with eating and drinking of all sorts, fit for the King himself." Billy did this, and then he spread out the napkin, and ate and drank to his heart's content, and he rolled up the napkin and put it back in the bull's ear again. "Then," says the bull, "now put your hand into my right ear and you 'll find a bit of a stick; if you wind it over your head three times, it will be turned into a sword and give you the strength of a thousand men besides your own, and when you have no more need of it as a sword, it will change back into a stick again." Billy did all this. Then says the bull, "At twelve o'clock the morrow I 'll have to meet and fight a great bull." Billy then got up again on the bull's back, and the bull started off and away where you would n't know day by night, or night by day, over low hills, high hills, sheep-walks, and bullock-traces, the Cove of Cork, and old Tom Fox with his bugle horn. There he met the other bull, and both of them fought, and the like of their fight was never seen before or since. They knocked the soft ground into hard, and the hard into soft; the soft into spring wells, the spring wells into rocks, and the rocks into high hills. They fought long, and Billy Beg's bull killed the other, and drank his blood. Then Billy took the napkin out of his ear again and spread it out and ate a hearty good dinner. Then says the bull to Billy, says he, "At twelve o'clock to-morrow, I 'm to meet the bull's brother that I killed the day, and we 'll have a hard fight." Billy got on the bull's back again, and the bull started off and away where you would n't know day by night, or night by day, over high hills, low hills, sheep-walks and bulloch-traces, the Cove of Cork, and old Tom Fox with his bugle horn. There he met the bull's brother that he killed the day before, and they set to, and they fought, and the like of the fight was never seen before or since. They knocked the soft ground into hard, the hard into soft, the soft into spring wells, the spring wells into rocks, and the rocks into high hills. They fought long, and at last Billy's bull killed the other and drank his blood. And then Billy took out the napkin out of the bull's ear again and spread it out and ate another hearty dinner. Then says the bull to Billy, says he, "The morrow at twelve o'clock I 'm to fight the brother to the two bulls I killed — he 's a mighty great bull entirely, the strongest of them all; he 's called the Black Bull of the Forest, and he 'll be too able for me. When I 'm dead!" says the bull, "you, Billy, will take with you the napkin, and you 'll never be hungry; and the stick, and you 'll be able to overcome everything that comes in your way; and take out your knife and cut a strip of the hide off my back and another strip off my belly, and make a belt of them, and as long as you wear them you cannot be killed." Billy was very sorry to hear this, but he got up on the bull's back again, and they started off and away where you would n't know day by night or night by day, over high hills, low hills, sheep-walks, and bulloch-traces, the Cove of Cork, and Old Tom Fox with his bugle horn. And sure enough at twelve o'clock the next day they met the great Black Bull of the Forest and both of the bulls to it, and commenced to fight, and the like of the fight was never seen before or since; they knocked the soft ground into hard ground, and the hard ground into soft; and the soft into spring wells, the spring wells into rocks, and the rocks into high hills. And they fought long, but at length the Black Bull of the Forest killed Billy Beg's bull and drank his blood. Billy Beg was so vexed at this that for two days he sat over the bull neither eating nor drinking, but crying salt tears all the time. Then he got up, and he spread out the napkin, and ate a hearty dinner, for he was very hungry with his long fast; and after that he cut a strip of the hide off the bull's back and another off the belly, and made a belt for himself, and taking it and the bit of stick, and the napkin, he set out to push his fortune, and he travelled for three days and three nights till at last he came to a great gentleman's place. Billy asked the gentleman if he could give him employment, and the gentleman said he wanted just such a boy as him for herding cattle. Billy asked what cattle would he have to herd, and what wages would he get. The gentleman said he had three goats, three cows, three horses, and three asses that he fed in an orchard, but that no boy who went with them ever came back alive, for there were three giants, brothers, that came to milk the cows and the goats every day, and killed the boy that was herding; so if Billy liked to try, they would n't fix the wages till they 'd see if he would come back alive.

"Agreed, then," said Billy. So the next morning he got up and drove out the three goats, the three cows, the three horses, and the three asses to the orchard and commenced to feed them. About the middle of the day Billy heard three terrible roars that shook the apples off the bushes, shook the horns on the cows, and made the hair stand up on Billy's head, and in comes a frightful big giant with three heads, and begun to threaten Bill. "You 're too big," says the giant, "for one bite, and too small for two. What will I do with you?" "I 'll fight you," says Billy, says he, stepping out to him and swinging the bit of stick three times over his head, when it changed into a sword and gave him the strength of a thousand men besides his own. The giant laughed at the size of him, and says he, "Well, how will I kill you? Will it be by a swing by the back, a cut of the sword, or a square round of boxing?" "With a swing by the back," says Billy, "if you can." So they both laid holds, and Billy lifted the giant clean off the ground, and fetching him down again sunk him in the earth up to his arm pits. "Oh, have mercy!" says the giant. But Billy, taking his sword, killed the giant, and cut out his tongues. It was evening by this time, so Billy drove home the three goats, three cows, three horses, and three asses, and all the vessels in the house was n't able to hold all the milk the cows give that night.

"Well," says the gentleman, "this beats me, for I never saw any one coming back alive out of there before, nor the cows with a drop of milk. Did you see anything in the orchard?" says he. "Nothing worse nor myself," says Billy. "What about my wages, now?" says Billy. "Well," says the gentleman, "you 'll hardly come alive out of the orchard the morrow. So we 'll wait till after that." Next morning his master told Billy that something must have happened one of the giants, for he used to hear cries of three every night, but last night he only heard two crying. "I don't know," said Billy, "anything about them." That morning after he got his breakfast Billy drove the three goats, three cows, three horses, and three asses into the orchard again, and began to feed them. About twelve o'clock he heard three terrible roars that shook the apples off the bushes, the horns off the cows, and made the hair stand up on Billy's head, and in comes a frightful big giant, with six heads, and he told Billy he had killed his brother yesterday, but he would make him pay for it the day. "Ye 're too big," says he, "for one bite, and too small for two, and what will I do with you?" "I 'll fight you," says Billy, swinging his stick three times over his head, and turning it into a sword, and giving him the strength of a thousand men besides his own. The giant laughed at him, and says he, "How will I kill you — with a swing by the back, a cut of the sword, or a square round of boxing?" "With a swing by the back," says Billy, "if you can." So the both of them laid holds, and Billy lifted the giant clean off the ground, and fetching him down again, sunk him in it up to the arm-pits. "Oh, spare my life!" says the giant. But Billy taking up his sword, killed him and cut out his tongues. It was evening by this time, and Billy drove home his three goats, three cows, three horses, and three asses, and what milk the cows gave that night overflowed all the vessels in the house, and, running out, turned a rusty mill that had n't been turned before for thirty years. If the master was surprised seeing Billy coming back the night before, he was ten times more surprised now.

"Did you see anything in the orchard the day?" says the gentleman. "Nothing worse nor myself," says Billy. "What about my wages now?" says Billy. "Well, never mind about your wages," says the gentleman, "till the morrow, for I think you 'll hardly come back alive again," says he. Well and good, Billy went to his bed, and the gentleman went to his bed, and when the gentleman rose in the morning, says he to Billy "I don't know what 's wrong with two of the giants; I only heard one crying last night." "I don't know," says Billy, "they must be sick or something." Well, when Billy got his breakfast that day, again he set out to the orchard, driving before him the three goats, three cows, three horses, and three asses, and sure enough about the middle of the day he hears three terrible roars again, and in comes another giant, this one with twelve heads on him, and if the other two were frightful, surely this one was ten times more so. "You villain, you," says he to Billy, "you killed my two brothers, and I 'll have my revenge on you now. Prepare till I kill you," says he; "you 're too big for one bite, and too small for two; what will I do with you?" "I 'll fight you," says Billy, shaping out and winding the bit of stick three times over his head. The giant laughed heartily at the size of him, and says he, "What way do you prefer being killed? Is it with a swing by the back, a cut of the sword, or a square round of boxing?" "A swing by the back," says Billy. So both of them again laid holds, and my brave Billy lifts the giant clean off the ground, and fetching him down again, sunk him down to his arm-pits in it. "Oh, have mercy! Spare my life!" says the giant. But

Billy took his sword, and, killing him, cut out his tongues. That evening he drove home his three goats, three cows, three horses, and three asses, and the milk of the cows had to be turned into a valley where it made a lough three miles long, three miles broad, and three miles deep, and that lough has been filled with salmon and white trout ever since. The gentleman wondered now more than ever to see Billy back the third day alive. "Did you see nothing in the orchard the day, Billy?" says he. "No, nothing worse nor myself," says Billy. "Well, that beats me," says the gentleman. "What about my wages now?" says Billy. "Well, you 're a good, mindful boy, that I could n't easy do without," says the gentleman, "and I 'll give you any wages you ask for the future." The next morning, says the gentleman to Billy, "I heard none of the giants crying last night, however it comes." "I don't know," says Billy, "they must be sick or something." "Now, Billy," says the gentleman, "you must look after the cattle the day again, while I go to see the fight." "What fight?" says Billy. "Why," says the gentleman, "it 's the king's daughter is going to be devoured by a fiery dragon, if the greatest fighter in the land, that they have been feeding specially for the last three months, is n't able to kill the dragon first. And if he 's able to kill the dragon the king is to give him the daughter in marriage." "That will be fine!" says Billy. Billy drove out his three goats, three cows, three horses, and three asses to the orchard that day again, and the like of all that passed that day to see the fight with the man and the fiery dragon, Billy never witnessed before. They went in coaches and carriages, on horses and jackasses, riding and walking, crawling and creeping. "My tight little fellow," says a man that was passing to Billy, "why don't you come to see the great fight?" "What would take the likes of me there?" says Billy. But when Billy found them all gone he saddled and bridled the best black horse his master had, and put on the best suit of clothes he could get in his master's house, and rode off to the fight after the rest. When Billy went there he saw the king's daughter, with the whole court about her, on a platform before the castle, and he thought he never saw anything half as beautiful, and the great warrior that was to fight the dragon was walking up and down on the lawn before her, with three men carrying his sword, and every one in the whole country gathered there looking at him. But when the fiery dragon came up with twelve heads on him, and every mouth of him spitting fire, and let twelve roars out of him, the warrior ran away and hid himself up to the neck in a well of water, and all they could do they could n't get him to come and face the dragon. Then the king's daughter asked if there was no one there to save her from the dragon, and get her in marriage. But no one stirred. When Billy saw this, he tied the belt of the bull's hide round him, swung his stick over his head, and went in, and after a terrible fight, entirely killed the dragon. Everyone then gathered about to find who the stranger was. Billy jumped on his horse and darted away sooner than let them know; but just as he was getting away the king's daughter pulled the shoe off his foot. When the dragon was killed the warrior that had hid in the well of water came out, and cutting off the heads of the dragon he brought them to the king, and said that it was he who killed the dragon, in disguise; and he claimed the king's daughter. But she tried the shoe on him and found it did n't fit him; so she said it was n't him, and that she would marry no one only the man the shoe fitted. When Billy got home he changed his clothes again, and had the horse in the stable, and the cattle all in before his master came. When the master came, he began telling Billy about the wonderful day they had entirely, and about the warrior hiding in the well of water, and about the grand stranger that came down out of the sky in a cloud on a black horse, and killed the fiery dragon, and then vanished in a cloud again. "And now," says he, "Billy, was n't that wonderful?" "It was, indeed," says Billy, "very wonderful entirely." After that it was given out over the country that all the people were to come to the king's castle on a certain day, till the king's daughter would try the shoe on them, and whoever it fitted she was to marry them. When the day arrived Billy was in the orchard with the three goats, three cows, three horses, and three asses, as usual, and the like of all the crowds that passed that day going to the king's castle to get the shoe tried on, he never saw before. They went in coaches and carriages, on horses and jackasses, riding and walking, and crawling and creeping. They all asked Billy was not he going to the king's castle, but Billy said, "Arrah, what would be bringin' the likes of me there?" At last when all the others had gone there passed an old man with a very scarecrow suit of rags on him, and Billy stopped him and asked him what boot would he take and swap clothes with him. "Just take care of yourself, now," says the old man, "and don't be playing off your jokes on my clothes, or maybe I'd make you feel the weight of this stick." But Billy soon let him see it was in earnest he was, and both of them swapped suits, Billy giving the old man boot. Then off to the castle started Billy, with the suit of rags on his back and an old stick in his hand, and when he come there he found all in great commotion, trying on the shoe, and some of them cutting down their foot, trying to get it to fit. But it was all of no use, the shoe could be got to fit none of them at all, and the king's daughter was going to give up in despair when the wee, ragged-looking boy, which was Billy, elbowed his way through them, and says he, "Let me try it on; maybe it would fit me." But the people when they saw him, all began to laugh at the sight of him, and "Go along out of that, you example, you," says they, shoving and pushing him back. But the king's daughter saw him, and called on them by all manner of means to let him come up and try on the shoe. So Billy went up, and all the people looked on, breaking their hearts laughing at the conceit of it. But what would you have of it, but to the dumfounding of them all, the shoe fitted Billy as nice as if it was made on his foot for a last. So the king's daughter claimed Billy as her husband. He then confessed that it was he that killed the fiery dragon; and when the king had him dressed up in a silk and satin suit, with plenty of gold and silver ornaments, everyone gave in that his like they never saw afore. He was then married to the king's daughter, and the wedding lasted nine days, nine hours, nine minutes, nine half minutes, and nine quarter minutes, and they lived happy and well from that day to this. I got brogues of *brochan* * and breeches of glass, a bit of pie for telling a lie, and then I came slithering home.

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*Porridge.

The Princes Fire-flash and Fire-fade

HIS HIGHNESS FIRE-FLASH was a Prince who was fond of fishing; and so great was his luck, that big fishes, and little fishes, and all kinds of fishes came to his line. His younger brother, Prince Fire-fade, was fond of hunting, and all his luck was on the hills, and in the woods, where he caught birds and beasts of every kind.

One day Prince Fire-fade said to his elder brother, Prince Fire-flash: "Let us change. You go and hunt instead of me, and I will try my luck at fishing, if you will lend me your line and hook." Prince Fire-flash did not care much to change, and at first said "No"; but his brother kept on teasing him about it, until at last he said, "Very well, then; let us change."

Then Prince Fire-fade tried his luck at fishing, but not a single fish did he catch; and, what was worse, he lost his brother's fish-hook in the sea.

Prince Fire-flash asked him for the hook, saying: "Hunting is one thing, and fishing is another. Let us both go back to our own ways."

Then said Prince Fire-fade: "I did not catch a single fish with your hook, and at last I lost it in the sea."

But Prince Fire-flash said: "I must and shall have my fish-hook." So the younger brother broke his long sword, that was girded on him, and, of the pieces, made five hundred fish-hooks, and begged Prince Fire-flash to take them, but he would not. Then Prince Fire-fade made a thousand fish-hooks and said: "Please take them instead of the one which I lost." But the elder brother said: "No, I must have my own hook, and I will not take any other."

Then Prince Fire-fade was very sorry, and sat down by the sea-shore, crying bitterly.

By and by the Wise Old Man of the Sea came to him and asked: "Why are you crying so bitterly, Prince Fire-fade?" Fire-fade told him all the story of the lost fish-hook, and how that his brother was angry, still saying that he must have that very same hook and no other. Then the Wise Old Man of the Sea built a stout little boat, and made Prince Fire-fade sit in it. Having pushed it a little from the land, he said: "Now go on for some time in the boat; it will be very pleasant, for the sea is calm. Soon you will come to a palace built like fishes' scales; this is the palace of the Sea-king. When you reach the gate, you will see a fine cassia-tree growing above the well by the side of the gate. If you will sit on the top of that tree, the Sea-king's daughter will see you, and tell you what to do."

So Prince Fire-fade did as he was told, and everything came to pass just as the Wise Old Man of the Sea had told him. As soon as he was come to the Sea-king's palace, he made haste, and climbed up into the cassia-tree, and sat there. Then came the maidens of the Princess Pearl, the Sea-king's daughter, carrying golden water-pots. They were just going to draw water, when they saw a flood of light upon the well. They looked up, and there in the cassia-tree was a beautiful young man. Prince Fire-fade saw the maidens, and asked for some water. The maidens drew some, and put it in a golden cup, and gave him to drink. Without tasting the water, the Prince took the jewel that hung at his neck, put it between his lips, and let it drop into the golden cup. It stuck to the cup, so that the maidens could not take it off; so they brought the cup, with the jewel on it, to the Princess Pearl.

When she saw the jewel, the Princess asked her maidens: "Is there anyone inside the gate?" So the maidens answered: "There is someone sitting on the top of the cassia-tree, above our well. It is a beautiful young man — more beautiful even than our King. He asked for water, and we gave him some; but, without drinking it, he dropped this jewel from his lips into the cup, and we have brought it to you." Then Princess Pearl, thinking this very strange, went out to look. She was delighted at the sight, but not giving the Prince time to take more than one little peep at her, she ran to tell her father, saying: "Father, there is a beautiful person at our gate."

Then the Sea-king himself went out to look. When he saw the young man on the top of the tree, he knew that it must be Prince Fire-fade. He made him come down, and led him into the palace, where he seated him upon a throne made of sea-asses' skins, and silk rugs, eight layers of each. Then a great feast was spread, and every one was so kind to Prince Fire-fade, that the end of it was, he married Princess Pearl, and lived in that land for three years.

Now, one night, when the three years had almost passed, Prince Fire-fade thought of his home, and what had happened there, and heaved one deep sigh.

Princess Pearl was grieved, and told her father, saying: "We have been so happy these three years, and he never sighed before, but, last night, he heaved one deep sigh. What can the meaning of it be?" So the Sea-king asked the Prince to tell him what ailed him, and also what had been the reason of his coming to that land. Then Prince Fire-fade told the Sea-king all the story of the lost fish-hook, and how his elder brother had behaved.

The Sea-king at once called together all the fishes of the sea, great and small, and asked: "Has any fish taken this fish-hook?" So all the fishes said: "The *tai* * has been complaining of something sticking in his throat, and hurting him when he eats, so perhaps he has taken the hook."

So they made the *tai* open his mouth, and looked in his throat, and there, sure enough, was the fish-hook. Then the hook was washed and given to Prince Fire-fade. The Sea-king also gave him two jewels. One was called the tide-flowing jewel, and the other was called the tide-ebbing jewel. And he said then to the Prince: "Go home now to your own land, and take back the fish-hook to your brother. In this way you shall plague him. If he plant rice-fields in the upland, make you your rice-fields in the valley; and if he make rice-fields in the valley, do you make your rice-fields in the upland. I will rule the water so that it may do good to you, but harm to him. If Prince Fire-flash should be angry with you for this, and try to kill you, then put out the tide-flowing jewel, and the tide will come up to drown him. But if he is sorry, and asks pardon, then put out the tide-ebbing jewel, and the tide will go back, and let him live."

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* A kind of fish.

Then the Sea-king called all the crocodiles, and said: "His Highness Prince Fire-fade is going to the upper world; which of you will take him there quickly, and bring me back word?" And one crocodile a fathom long, answered: "I will take him to the upper world, and come back in a day."

"Do so, then," said the Sea-king, "and be sure that you do not frighten him as you are crossing the middle of the sea." He then seated the Prince upon the crocodile's head, and saw him off.

The crocodile brought him safe home, in one day, as he had promised. When the crocodile was going to start back again, Prince Fire-fade untied the dirk from his own belt, and setting it on the creature's neck, sent him away.

Then Prince Fire-fade gave the fish-hook to his elder brother; and, in all things, did as the Sea-king had told him to do. So from that time, Prince Fire-flash became poor, and came with great fury to kill his brother. But, just in time, Prince Fire-fade put forth the tide-flowing jewel to drown him. When he found himself in such danger, Prince Fire-flash said he was sorry. So his brother put forth the tide-ebbing jewel to save him.

When he had been plagued in this way for a long time, he bowed his head, saying: "From this time forth, I submit to you, my younger brother. I will be your guard by day and by night, and in all things serve you." His struggles in the water, when he thought he was drowning, are shown at the Emperor's Court even to this very day.

Panch-Phul Ranee

A CERTAIN Rajah had two wives, of whom he preferred the second to the first; the first Ranee had a son, but because he was not the child of the second Ranee, his father took a great dislike to him, and treated him so harshly that the poor boy was very unhappy.

One day, therefore, he said to his mother: "Mother, my father does not care for me, and my presence is only a vexation to him. I should be happier anywhere than here; let me therefore go and seek my fortune in other lands."

So the Ranee asked her husband if he would allow their son to travel. He said, "The boy is free to go, but I don't see how he is to live in any other part of the world, for he is too stupid to earn his living, and I will give him no money to squander on senseless pleasures." Then the Ranee told her son that he had his father's permission to travel, and said to him, "You are going out into the world now to try your luck; take with you the food and clothes I have provided for your journey." And she gave him a bundle of clothes and several small loaves, and in each loaf she placed a gold mohur, that on opening it, he might find money as well as food inside; and he started on his journey.

When the young Rajah had travelled a long way, and left his father's kingdom far behind, he one day came upon the outskirts of a great city, where, instead of taking the position due to his rank, and sending to inform the Rajah of his arrival, he went to a poor Carpenter's house, and begged of him a lodging for the night. The Carpenter was busy making wooden clogs in the porch of his house, but he looked up and nodded, saying, "Young man, you are welcome to any assistance a stranger may need and we can give. If you are in want of food, you will find my wife and daughter in the house; they will be happy to cook for you." The Rajah went inside and said to the Carpenter's daughter, "I am a stranger and have travelled a long way; I am both tired and hungry; cook me some dinner as fast as you can, and I will pay you for your trouble." She answered, "I would willingly cook you some dinner at once, but I have no wood to light the fire, and the jungle is some way off." "It matters not," said the Rajah; "this will do to light the fire, and I 'll make the loss good to your father"; and taking a pair of new clogs which the Carpenter had just finished making, he broke them up and lighted the fire with them.

Next morning, he went into the jungle, cut wood, and, having made a pair of new clogs — better than those with which he had lighted the fire the evening before — placed them with the rest of the goods for sale in the Carpenter's shop. Shortly afterward, one of the servants of the Rajah of that country came to buy a pair of clogs for his master, and seeing these new ones, said to the Carpenter, "Why, man, these clogs are better than all the rest put together. I will take none other to the Rajah. I wish you would always make such clogs as these." And throwing down ten gold mohurs on the floor of the hut, he took up the clogs and went away.

The Carpenter was much surprised at the whole business. In the first place, he usually received only two or three rupees for each pair of clogs; and in the second, he knew that these which the Rajah's servant had judged worth ten gold mohurs had not been made by him; and how they had come there he could not think, for he felt certain they were not with the rest of the clogs the night before. He thought and thought, but the more he thought about the matter the more puzzled he got, and he went to talk about it to his wife and daughter. Then his daughter said, "Oh, those must have been the clogs the stranger made!" And she told her father how he had lighted the fire the night before with two of the clogs which were for sale, and had afterward fetched wood from the jungle and made another pair to replace them.

The Carpenter, at this news, was more astonished than ever, and he thought to himself, "Since this stranger seems a quiet, peaceable sort of man, and can make clogs so well, it is a great pity he should leave this place; he would make a good husband for my daughter"; and, catching hold of the young Rajah, he propounded his scheme to him. (But all this time he had no idea that his guest was a Rajah.)

Now the Carpenter's daughter was a very pretty girl — as pretty as any Ranee you ever saw; she was also good-tempered, clever, and could cook extremely well. So when the Carpenter asked the Rajah to be his son-in-law, he looked at the father, the mother, and the girl, and thinking to himself that many a better man had a worse fate, he said, "Yes, I will marry your daughter, and stay here and make clogs." So the Rajah married the Carpenter's daughter.

This Rajah was very clever at making all sorts of things in wood. When he had made all the clogs he wished to sell next day, he would amuse himself in making toys; and in this way he made a thousand wooden parrots. They were as like real parrots as possible. They had each two wings, two legs, two eyes, and a sharp beak. And when the Rajah had finished them all, he painted and varnished them and put them, one afternoon, outside the house to dry.

Night came on, and with it came Parbuttee and Mahdeo, flying round the world to see the different races of men. Among the many places they visited was the city where the Carpenter lived; and in the garden in front of the house they saw the thousand wooden parrots which the Rajah had made and painted and varnished, all placed out to dry. Then Parbuttee turned to Mahdeo, and said, "These parrots are very well made — they need nothing but life. Why should not we give them life?" Mahdeo answered, "What would be the use of that? It would be a strange freak, indeed!" "Oh," said Parbuttee, "I only meant you to do it as an amusement. It would be so funny to see the wooden parrots flying about! But do not do it if you don't like." "You would like it, then?"

answered Mahdeo. "Very well, I will do it." And he endowed the thousand parrots with life.

Parbuttee and Mahdeo then flew away.

Next morning the Rajah got up early to see if the varnish he had put on the wooden parrots was dry; but no sooner did he open the door than — marvel of marvels! — the thousand wooden parrots all came walking into the house, flapping their wings and chatting to each other.

Hearing the noise, the Carpenter and the Carpenter's wife and daughter came running out to see what was the matter, and were not less astonished than the Rajah himself at the miracle which had taken place. Then the Carpenter's wife turned to her son-in-law, and said, "It is all very well that you should have made these wooden parrots; but I don't know where we are to find food for them! Great, strong parrots like these will eat not less than a pound of rice apiece every day. Your father-in-law and I cannot afford to procure as much as that for them in this poor house. If you wish to keep them, you must live elsewhere, for we cannot provide for you all."

"Very well," said the Rajah; "you shall not have cause to accuse me of ruining you, for from henceforth I will have a house of my own." So he and his wife went to live in a house of their own, and he took the thousand parrots with him, and his mother-in-law gave her daughter some corn and rice and money to begin housekeeping with. Moreover, he found that the parrots, instead of being an expense, were the means of increasing his fortune; for they flew away every morning early to get food, and spent the whole day out in the fields; and every evening, when they returned home, each parrot brought in his beak a stalk of corn or rice, or whatever it had found good to eat. Their master therefore was regularly supplied with more food than enough; and what with selling what he did not require, and working at his trade, he soon became quite a rich carpenter.

After he had been living in this way very happily for some time, one night, when he fell asleep, the Rajah dreamed a wonderful dream, and this was the dream:

He thought that very, very far away beyond the Red Sea was a beautiful kingdom surrounded by seven other seas; and that it belonged to a Rajah and Ranee who had one lovely daughter, named Panch-Phul Ranee (the Five Flower Queen), after whom the whole kingdom was called Panch-Phul Ranee's country; and that this Princess lived in the centre of her father's kingdom, in a little house round which were seven wide ditches, and seven great hedges made of spears; and that she was called Panch-Phul Ranee because she was so light and delicate that she weighed no more than five white lotus flowers! Moreover, he dreamed that this Princess had vowed to marry no one who would not cross the seven seas, and jump the seven ditches and seven hedges made of spears.

After dreaming this the young Rajah awoke, and feeling much puzzled, got up, and sitting with his head in his hands, tried to think the matter over and discover if he had ever heard anything like his dream before; but he could make nothing of it.

While he was thus thinking, his wife awoke and asked him what was the matter. He told her, and she said, "That is a strange dream. If I were you, I 'd ask the old parrot about it; he is a wise bird, and perhaps he knows." This parrot of which she spoke was the most wise of all the thousand wooden parrots. The Rajah took his wife's advice, and when all the birds came home that evening, he called the old parrot and told him his dream, saying, "Can this be true?" To which the parrot replied, "It is all true. The Panch-Phul Ranee's country lies beyond the Red Sea, and is surrounded by seven seas, and she dwells in a house built in the centre of her father's kingdom. Round her house are seven ditches, and seven hedges made of spears, and she has vowed not to marry any man who cannot jump these seven ditches and seven hedges; and because she is very beautiful many great and noble men have tried to do this, but in vain.

"The Rajah and Rance, her father and mother, are very fond of her and proud of her. Every day she goes to the palace to see them, and they weigh her in a pair of scales. They put her in one scale and five lotus flowers in the other, and she 's so delicate and fragile she weighs no heavier than the five little flowers, so they call her the Panch-Phul Ranee. Her father and mother are very proud of this."

"I should like to go to that country and see the Panch-Phul Ranee," said the Rajah; "but I don't know how I could cross the seven seas." "I will show you how to manage that," replied the old parrot. "I and another parrot will fly close together, I crossing my left over his right wing; so that we will move along as if we were one bird (using only our outside wings to fly with), and on the chair made of our interlaced wings you shall sit, and we will carry you safely across the seven seas. On the way we will every evening alight in some high tree and rest, and every morning we can go on again." "That sounds a good plan; I have a great desire to try it," said the Rajah. "Wife, what should you think of my going to the Panch-Phul Ranee's country, and seeing if I can jump the seven ditches, and seven hedges made of spears. Will you let me try?"

"Yes," she answered. "If you like to go and marry her, go; only take care that you do not kill yourself; and mind you come back some day." And she prepared food for him to take with him, and took off her gold and silver bangles, which she placed in a bundle of warm things, that he might be in need neither of money nor clothes on the journey. He then charged the nine hundred and ninety-eight parrots he left behind him to bring her plenty of corn and rice daily (that she might never need food while he was away), and took her to the house of her father, in whose care she was to remain during his absence; and he wished her good-bye, saying, "Do not fear but that I will come back to you, even if I do win the Panch-Phul Ranee, for you will always be my first wife, though you are the Carpenter's daughter."

The old parrot and another parrot then spread their wings, on which the Rajah seated himself as on a chair, and rising up in the air, they flew away with him out of sight.

Far, far, far they flew, as fast as parrots can fly, over hills, over forests, over rivers, over valleys, on, on, on, hour after hour, day after day, week after week, only staying to rest every night when it got too dark to see where they were going. At last they reached the seven seas which surrounded the Panch-Phul Ranee's country. When once they began crossing the seas they could not rest (for there was neither rock nor island on which to alight), so they were obliged to fly straight across them, night and day, until they gained the shore.

By reason of this the parrots were too exhausted on their arrival to go as far as the city where the Rajah, Panch-Phul Ranee's father, lived, but they flew down to rest on a beautiful banyan tree, which grew not far from the sea, close to a small village. The Rajah determined to go into the village and get food and shelter there. He told the parrots to stay in the banyan tree till his return; then, leaving his bundle of clothes and most of his money in their charge, he set off on foot toward the nearest house.

After a little while he reached a Malee's cottage, and giving a gold mohur to the Malee's wife, got her to provide him with food and shelter for the night.

Next morning he rose early, and said to his hostess, "I am a stranger here, and know nothing of the place. What is the name of your country?" "This," she said, "is Panch-Phul Ranee's country."

"And what is the last news in your town?" he asked. "Very bad news indeed," she replied. "You must know our Rajah has one only daughter — a most beautiful Princess — and her name is Panch-Phul Ranee, for she is so light and delicate that she weighs no heavier than five lotus flowers. After her this whole country is called Panch-Phul Ranee's country. She lives in a small bungalow in the centre of the city you see yonder; but, unluckily for us, she has vowed to marry no man who cannot jump on foot over the seven hedges made of spears, and across the seven great ditches that surround her house. This cannot be done, Babamah! I don't know how many hundreds of thousands of Rajahs have tried to do it and died in the attempt! Yet the Princess will not break her vow. Daily, worse and worse tidings come from the city of fresh people having been killed in trying to jump the seven hedges and seven ditches, and I see no end to the misfortunes that will arise from it. Not only are so many brave men lost to the world, but, since the Princess will marry no one who does not succeed in this, she stands a chance of not marrying at all; and if that be so, when the Rajah dies there will be no one to protect her and claim the right to succeed to the throne. All the nobles will probably fight for the Raj, and the whole kingdom be turned topsy-turvy."

"Mahi," said the Rajah, "if that is all there is to do, I will try and win your Princess, for I can jump right well."

"Baba," answered the Malee's wife, "do not think of such a thing; are you mad? I tell you, hundreds of thousands of men have said these words before, and been killed for their rashness. What power do you think you possess, to succeed where all before you have failed? Give up all thought of this, for it is utter folly."

"I will not do it," answered the Rajah, "before going to consult some of my friends."

So he left the Malee's cottage, and returned to the banyan tree to talk over the matter with the parrots; for he thought they would be able to carry him on their wings across the seven ditches and seven hedges made of spears. When he reached the old tree the parrot said to him, "It is two days since you left us; what news have you brought from the village?" The Rajah answered, "The Panch-Phul Ranee still lives in the house surrounded by the seven ditches, and seven hedges made of spears, and has vowed to marry no man who cannot jump over them; but cannot you parrots, who brought me all the way over the seven seas, carry me on your wings across these great barriers?"

"You stupid man!" answered the old parrot, "of course we could; but what would be the good of doing so? If we carried you across, it would not be at all the same thing as your jumping across, and the Princess would no more consent to marry you than she would now; for she has vowed to marry no one who has not jumped across *on foot*. If you want to do the thing, why not do it yourself, instead of talking nonsense. Have you forgotten how, when you were a little boy, you were taught to jump by conjurors and tumblers (for the parrot knew all the Rajah's history)? Now is the time to put their lessons in practice. If you can jump the seven ditches, and seven hedges made of spears, you will have done a good work, and be able to marry the Panch-Phul Ranee; but if not, this is a thing in which we cannot help you."

"You reason justly," replied the Rajah. "I will try to put in practice the lessons I learnt when a boy; meantime, do you stay here till my return."

So saying, he went away to the city, which he reached by nightfall. Next morning early he went to where the Princess's bungalow stood, to try to jump the fourteen great barriers. He was strong and agile, and he jumped the seven great ditches, and six of the seven hedges made of spears; but in running to jump the seventh hedge he hurt his foot, and, stumbling, fell upon the spears and died — run through and through with the cruel iron spikes.

When Panch-Phul Ranee's father and mother got up that morning and looked out, as their custom was, toward their daughter's bungalow, they saw something transfixed upon the seventh hedge of spears, but what it was they could not make out, for it dazzled their eyes. So the Rajah called his Wuzeer and said to him, "For some days I have seen no one attempt to jump the seven hedges and seven ditches round Panch-Phul Ranee's bungalow; but what is that which I now see upon the seventh hedge of spears?" The Wuzeer answered, "That is a Rajah's son, who has failed, like all who have gone before him." "But how is it," asked the Rajah, "that he thus dazzles our eyes?"

"It is," replied the Wuzeer, "because he is so beautiful. Of all that have died for the sake of Panch-Phul Ranee, this youth is, beyond doubt, the handsomest." "Alas!" cried the Rajah, "how many and how many brave men has my daughter killed? I will have no more die for her. Let us send her and the dead man together away into the jungle."

Then he ordered the servants to fetch the young Rajah's body. There he lay, still and beautiful, with a glory shining round him as the moonlight shines round the clear bright moon, but without a spark of life.

When the Rajah saw him, he said, "Oh, pity, pity, that so brave and handsome a boy should have come dying after this girl! Yet he is but one of the thousands of thousands who have died thus to no purpose. Pull up the spears and cast them into the seven ditches, for they shall remain no longer."

Then he commanded two palanquins to be prepared and men in readiness to carry them, and said, "Let the girl be married to the young Rajah, and let both be taken far away into the jungle, that we may never see them more. Then there will be quiet in the land again."

The Ranee, Panch-Phul Ranee's mother, cried bitterly at this, for she was very fond of her daughter, and she begged her husband not to send her away so cruelly — the living with the dead; but the Rajah was inexorable. "That poor boy died," he said; "let my daughter die, too! I'll have no more men killed here."

So the two palanquins were prepared. Then he placed his daughter in the one, and her dead husband in the other, and said to the palkee-bearers, "Take these palkees and go out into the jungle until you have reached a place so desolate that not so much as a sparrow is to be seen, and there leave them both."

And so they did. Deep down in the jungle, where no bright sun could pierce the darkness, nor human voice be heard, far from any habitation of man or means of supporting life, on the edge of a dank, stagnant morass that was shunned by all but noisome reptiles and wandering beasts of prey, they set them down and left them, the dead husband and the living wife, alone to meet the horrors of the coming night — alone, without a chance of rescue.

Panch-Phul Ranee heard the bearers' retreating footsteps, and their voices getting fainter and fainter in the distance, and felt that she had nothing to hope for but death.

Night seemed coming on apace, for though the sun had not set, the jungle was dark so that but little light pierced the gloom; and she thought she would take a last look at the husband her vow had killed, and, sitting beside him, wait till starvation should make her as he was, or some wild animal put a more speedy end to her sufferings.

She left her palkee and went toward his. There he lay with closed eyes and close-shut lips; black curling hair, which escaped from under his turban, concealed a ghastly wound on his temple. There was no look of pain on the face, and the long, sweeping eyelashes gave it such a tender, softened expression she could hardly believe that he was dead. He was, in truth, very beautiful; and, watching him, she said to herself, "Alas, what a noble being is here lost to the world! what an earth's joy is extinguished! Was it for this I was cold, and proud, and stern — to break the cup of my own happiness and to be the death of such as you? Must you now never know that you won your wife? Must you never hear her ask your pardon for the past, nor know her cruel punishment? Ah, if you had but lived, how dearly I would have loved you! Oh, my husband! my husband!" And sinking down on the ground, she buried her face in her hands and cried bitterly.

While she was sitting thus, night closed over the jungle, and brought with it wild beasts that had left their dens and lairs in search of prey — to roam about, as the heat of the day was over. Tigers, lions, elephants, and bison, all came by turns, crushing through the underwood which surrounded the place where the palkees were, but they did no harm to Panch-Phul Ranee, for she was so fair that not even the cruel beasts of the forests would injure her. At last, about four o'clock in the morning, all the wild animals had gone except two little jackals, who had been very busy watching the rest and picking the bones left by the tigers. Tired with running about, they lay down to rest close to the palkees. Then one little jackal said to the other, who was her husband, "Do tell me a little story." "Dear me!" exclaimed he, "what people you women are for stories! Well, look just in front of you; do you see those two?" "Yes," she answered; "what of them?" "That woman you see sitting on the ground," he said, "is the Panch-Phul Ranee." "And what son of a Rajah is the man in the palkee?" asked she. "That," he replied, "is a very sorrowful son. His father was so unkind to him that he left his own home, and went to live in another country very far from this; and there he dreamed about the Panch-Phul Ranee, and came to our land in order to marry her, but he was killed in jumping the seventh hedge of spears, and all he gained was to die for her sake."

"That is very sad," said the first little jackal; "but could he never by any chance come to life again?" "Yes," answered the other; "maybe he could, if only someone knew how to apply the proper remedies." "What are the proper remedies, and how could he be cured?" asked the lady jackal. (Now, all this conversation had been heard by Panch-Phul Ranee, and when this question was asked she listened very eagerly and attentively for the answer.)

"Do you see this tree?" replied her husband. "Well, if some of its leaves were crushed, and a little of the juice put into the Rajah's two ears and upon his upper lip, and some upon his temples, also, and some upon the spear-wounds in his side, he would come to life again and be as well as ever."

At this moment day dawned, and the two little jackals ran away. Panch-Phul Ranee did not forget their words. She, a Princess born, who had never put her foot to the ground before (so delicately and tenderly had she been reared), walked over the rough clods of earth and the sharp stones till she reached the place where the tree grew of which the jackals had spoken. She gathered a number of its leaves, and, with hands and feet that had never before done coarse or common work, beat and crushed them down. They were so stiff and strong that it took her a long time. At last, after tearing them, and stamping on them, and pounding them between two stones, and biting the hardest parts, she thought they were sufficiently crushed; and rolling them up in a corner of her saree, she squeezed the juice through it on to her husband's temples, and put a little on his upper lip and into his ears, and some also on the spear-wound in his side. And when she had done this, he awoke as if he had been only sleeping, and sat up, wondering where he was. Before him stood Panch-Phul Ranee shining like a glorious star, and all around them was the dark jungle.

It would be hard to say which of them was the more astonished — the Rajah or the Princess. She was surprised that the remedy should have taken such speedy effect, and could hardly believe her eyes when she saw her husband get up. And if he looked beautiful when dead, much more handsome did he seem to her now, so full of life and animation and power — the picture of health and strength. And he, in his turn, was lost in amazement at the exquisite loveliness of the lady who stood before him. He did not know who she could be, for he had never seen her like, except in a dream. Could she be really the world-renowned Panch-Phul Ranee, or was he dreaming still? He feared to move lest he should break the spell. But as he sat there wondering, she spoke, saying, "You marvel at what has taken place. You do not know me — I am Panch-Phul Ranee, your wife."

Then he said, "Ah, Princess, is it indeed you? You have been very hard to me." "I know, I know," she answered; "I caused your death, but I brought you to life again. Let the past be forgotten; come home with me, and my father and mother will welcome you as a son."

He replied, "No, I must return first to my own home a while. Do you rather return there now with me, for it is a long time since I left it, and afterward we will come again to your father's kingdom."

To this Panch-Phul Ranee agreed. It took them, however, a long time to find their way out of the jungle. At last they succeeded in doing so, for none of the wild animals in it attempted to injure them, so beautiful and royal did they both look.

When they reached the banyan tree, where the Rajah had left the two parrots, the old parrot called out to him, "So you have come back at last! We thought you never would, you were such a long time away! There you went, leaving us here all the time, and after all doing no good, but only getting yourself killed. Why didn't you do as we advised you, and jump up nicely?"

"Well, I 'm sure," said the Rajah, "yours is a hard case; but I beg your pardon for keeping you waiting so long, and now I hope you 'll take me and my wife home."

"Yes, we will do that," answered the parrots; "but you had better get some dinner first, for it 's a long journey over the seven seas."

So the Rajah went to the village close by and bought food for himself and the Panch-Phul Ranee. When he returned with it, he said to her, "I fear the long journey before us for you; had you not better let me make it alone, and return here for you when it is over?" But she answered, "No! what could I, a poor weak woman, do here alone? and I will not return to my father's house till you can come, too. Take me with you, however far you go; only promise me you will never leave me." So he promised her, and they both, mounting the parrots, were carried up in the air across the seven seas, across the Red Sea, on, on, on, a whole year's journey, until they reached his father's kingdom, and alighted to rest at the foot of the palace garden. The Rajah, however, did not know where he was, for all had much changed since he left it some years before.

Then a little son was born to the Rajah and Panch-Phul Ranee. He was a beautiful child, but his father was grieved to think that in that bleak place there was no shelter for the mother or the baby. So he said to his wife, "I will go to fetch food for us both, and fire to cook it with, and inquire what this country is, and seek out a place of rest for you. Do not be afraid; I shall soon return." Now, far off in the distance, smoke was to be seen rising from tents which belonged to some conjurors and dancing-people, and thither the Rajah bent his steps, feeling certain he should be able to get fire, and perhaps food also, from the inhabitants. When he got there, he found the place was much larger than he had expected — quite a good-sized village, in fact — the abode of Nautch people and conjurors. In all the houses the people were busy, some dancing, some singing, others trying various conjuring tricks or practising beating the drum, and all seemed happy and joyful.

When the conjurors saw him, they were so much struck with his appearance (for he was very handsome) that they determined to make him, if possible, stay among them, and join their band. And they said one to another, "How well he would look beating the drum for the dancers! All the world would come to see us dance, if we had such a handsome man as that to beat the drum."

The Rajah, unconscious of their intentions, went into the largest hut he saw, and said to a woman who was grinding corn, "Bai, give me a little rice, and some fire from your hearth." She immediately consented, and got up to fetch the burning sticks he asked for; but before she gave them to him, she and her companions threw upon them a certain powder, containing a very potent charm; and no sooner did the Rajah receive them than he forgot about his wife and little child, his journey, and all that had ever happened to him in his life before; such was the peculiar property of the powder. And when the conjurors said to him, "Why should you go away? stay with us, and be one of us," he willingly consented to do so.

All this time Panch-Phul Ranee waited and waited for her husband, but he never came. Night approached without his having brought her any food or news of having found a place of shelter for her and the baby. At last, faint and weary, she swooned away.

It happened that that very day the Ranee (Panch-Phul Ranee's husband's mother) lost her youngest child, a fine little boy of only a day old; and her servants took its body to the bottom of the garden to bury it. Just as they were going to do so, they heard a low cry, and, looking round, saw close by a beautiful woman lying on the ground, dead, or apparently so, and beside her a fine little baby boy. The idea immediately entered their heads of leaving the dead baby beside the dead woman, and taking her living baby back with them to the palace; and so they did.

When they returned, they said to their mistress, "Your child did not die; see, here it is — it got well again," and showed her Panch-Phul Ranee's baby. But after a time, when the Ranee questioned them about it, they told her the whole truth; but she had become meanwhile very fond of the little boy, and so he continued in the palace and was brought up as her son; being, in truth, her grandson, though she did not know it.

Meantime the palace Malee's wife went out, as her custom was every morning and evening, to gather flowers. In search of them she wandered as far as the jungle at the bottom of the garden, and there she found the Panch-Phul Ranee lying as dead, and the dead baby beside her.

The good woman felt very sorry, and rubbed the Ranee's cold hands and gave her sweet flowers to smell in hopes that she might revive. At last she opened her eyes, and seeing the Malee's wife, said, "Where am I? Has not my husband come back? and who are you?"

"My poor lady," answered the Malee's wife, "I do not know where your husband is. I am the Malee's wife, and coming here to gather flowers, I found you lying on the ground, and this your little baby, who is dead; but come home with me, I will take care of you."

Panch-Phul Ranee answered, "Kind friend, this is not my baby; he did not die; he was the image of his father, and fairer than this child. Someone must have taken him away, for but a little while ago, I held him in my arms, and he was strong and well, while this one could never have been more than a puny, weakly infant. Take me away; I will go home with you."

So the Malee's wife buried the dead child and took the Panch-Phul Ranee to her house, where she lived for fourteen years; but all that time she could gain no tidings of her husband or her lost little boy. The child, meanwhile, grew up in the palace, and became a very handsome youth. One day he was wandering round the garden and chanced to pass the Malee's house. The Panch-Phul Ranee was sitting within, watching the Malee's wife cook their dinner.

The young Prince saw her, and calling the Malee's wife, said to her, "What beautiful lady is that in your house? and how did she come there?" She answered, "Little Prince, what nonsense you talk! there is no lady here." He said again, "I know there is a beautiful lady here, for I saw her as I passed the open door." She replied, "If you come telling such tales about my house, I 'll pull your tongue out." For she thought to herself, "Unless I scold him well, the boy 'll go talking about what he 's seen in the palace, and then perhaps some of the people from there will come and take the poor Panch-Phul Ranee away from my care." But while the Malee's wife was talking to the young Prince, the Panch-Phul Ranee came from the inner room to watch and listen to him unobserved; and no sooner did she see him than she could not forbear crying out, "Oh, how like he is to my husband! The same eyes, the same shaped face and the same king-like bearing! Can he be my son? He is just the age my son would have been had he lived."

The young Prince heard her speaking and asked what she said, to which the Malee's wife replied, "The woman you saw, and who just now spoke, lost her child fourteen years ago, and she was saying to herself how like you were to that child, and thinking you must be the same; but she is wrong, for we know you are the Ranee's son." Then Panch-Phul Ranee herself came out of the house, and said to him, "Young Prince, I could not, when I saw you, help exclaiming how like you are to what my lost husband was, and to what my son might have been; for it is now fourteen years since I lost them both." And she told him how she had been a great Princess, and was returning with her husband to his own home and how her little baby had been born in the jungle, and her husband had gone away to seek shelter for her and the child, and fire and food, and had never returned; and also how, when she had fainted away, someone had certainly stolen her baby and left a dead child in its place; and how the good Malee's wife had befriended her, and taken her ever since to live in her house. And when she had ended her story she began to cry.

But the Prince said to her, "Be of good cheer; I will endeavour to recover your husband and child for you; who knows but I may indeed be your son, beautiful lady?" And running home to the Ranee (his adopted mother), he said to her, "Are you really my mother? Tell me truly; for this I must know before the sun goes down." "Why do you ask foolish questions?" she replied; "have I not always treated you as a son?" "Yes," he said; "but tell me the very truth; am I your own child, or the child of someone else, adopted as yours? If you do not tell me, I will kill myself." And so saying, he drew his sword. She replied, "Stay, stay, and I will tell you the whole truth; the day before you were born I had a little baby, but it died; and my servants took it to the bottom of the garden to bury it, and there they found a beautiful woman lying as dead, and beside her a living infant. You were that child. They brought you to the palace, and I adopted you as my son, and left my baby in your stead." "What became of my mother?" he asked. "I cannot tell," answered the Ranee; "for, two days afterward, when I sent to the same place, she and the baby had both disappeared, and I have never since heard of her."

The young Prince, on hearing this, said, "There is in the head Malee's house a beautiful lady, whom the Malee's wife found in the jungle, fourteen years ago; that must be my mother. Let her be received here this very day with all honour, for that is the only reparation that can now be made to her."

The Ranee consented, and the young Prince went down to the Malee's house himself to fetch his mother to the palace.

With him he took a great retinue of people, and a beautiful palanquin for her to go in, covered with rich trappings; also costly things for her to wear, and many jewels and presents for the good Malee's wife.

When Panch-Phul Ranee had put on her son's gifts, and come out of the Malee's poor cottage to meet him, all the people said there had never been so royal-looking a queen. As gold and clear crystal are lovely, as mother-of-pearl is exquisitely fair and delicate-looking, so beautiful, so fair, so delicate appeared Panch-Phul Ranee.

Her son conducted her with much pomp and state to the palace, and did all in his power to honour her; and there she lived long, very happily, and beloved by all.

One day the young Prince begged her to tell him again, from the beginning, the story of her life, and as much as she knew of his father's life; and so she did. And after that, he said to her, "Be no longer sad, dear mother, regarding my father's fate; for I will send into all lands to gather tidings of him, and maybe in the end we shall find him." And he sent people out to hunt for the Rajah all over the kingdom, and in all neighbouring countries — to the north, to the south, to the east and to the west — but they found him not.

At last, after four years of unsuccessful search, when there seemed no hope of ever learning what had become of him, Panch-Phul Ranee's son came to see her, and said, "Mother, I have sent into all lands seeking my father, but can hear no news of him. If there were only the slightest clue as to the direction in which he went, there would still be some chance of tracing him, but that, I fear, cannot be got. Do you not remember his having said anything of the way which he intended to go when he left you?" She answered, "When your father went away, his words to me were, 'I will go to fetch food for us both, and fire to cook it with, and inquire what this country is, and seek out a place of shelter for you. Do not be afraid — I shall soon return.' That was all he said, and then he went away, and I never saw him more."

"In what direction did he go from the foot of the garden?" asked the Prince. "He went," answered the Panch-Phul Ranee, "toward that village of conjurors close by. I thought he was intending to ask some of them to give us food. But had he done so, he would certainly have returned in a very short time."

"Do you think you should know my father, mother darling, if you were to see him again?" asked the Prince. "Yes," answered she, "I should know him again." "What!" he said, "even when eighteen years have gone by since you saw him last? Even though age and sickness and want had done their utmost to change him?" "Yes!" she replied; "his every feature is so impressed on my heart that I should know him again anywhere or in any disguise."

"Then let us," he said, "send for all those people in the direction of whose houses he went away. Maybe they have detained him among them to this day. It is but a chance, but we can hope for nothing more certain."

So the Panch-Phul Ranee and her son sent down orders to the conjurors' village that every one of the whole band should come up to the palace that afternoon — not a soul was to stay behind. And the dancers were to dance and the conjurors to play all their tricks for the amusement of the palace inmates.

The people came. The nautch girls began to dance — running, jumping, and flying here, there and everywhere, some up, some down, some round and round. The conjurors conjured and all began in different ways to amuse the company. Among the rest was one wild, ragged-looking man, whose business was to beat the drum. No sooner did the Panch-Phul Ranee set eyes on him than she said to her son, "Boy, that is your father!" "What, mother!" he said, "that wretched-looking man who is beating the drum?" "The same," she answered.

The Prince said to his servants, "Fetch that man here." And the Rajah came toward them, so changed that not even his own mother knew him — no one recognized him but his wife. For eighteen years he had been among the nautch people; his hair was rough, his beard untrimmed, his face thin and worn, sunburnt and wrinkled; he wore a nose-ring and heavy earrings, such as the nautch people have; and his dress was a rough, common cumlee. All traces of his former self seemed to have disappeared. They asked him if he did not remember he had been a Rajah once, and about his journey to Panch-Phul Ranee's country. But he said, No, he remembered nothing but how to beat the drum — Rub-a-dub! tat-tat! tom-tum! tom-tum! He thought he must have beaten it all his life.

Then the young Prince gave orders that all the nautch people should be put into jail until it could be discovered what part they had taken in reducing his father to so pitiable a state. And sending for the wisest doctors in the kingdom, he said to them, "Do your best and restore the health of this Rajah, who has to all appearance lost both memory and reason; and discover, if possible, what has caused these misfortunes to befall him." The doctors said, "He has certainly had some potent charm given to him, which has destroyed both his memory and reason, but we will do our best to counteract its influence."

And so they did. And their treatment succeeded so well that, after a time, the Rajah entirely recovered his former senses. And they took such good care of him that in a little while he regained his health and strength also, and looked almost as well as ever.

He then found to his surprise that he, Panch-Phul Ranee, and their son, had all this time been living in his father's kingdom. His father was so delighted to see him again that he was no longer unkind to him, but treated him as a dearly beloved, long lost son. His mother also was overjoyed at his return, and they said to him, "Since you have been restored to us again, why should you wander any more? Your wife and son are here; do you also remain here, and live among us for the rest of your days." But he replied, "I have another wife — the Carpenter's daughter — who first was kind to me in my adopted country. I also have there nine hundred and ninety-eight talking wooden parrots, which I greatly prize. Let me first go and fetch them."

They said, "Very well; go quickly and then return." So he mounted the two wooden parrots which had brought him from the Panch-Phul Ranee's country (and which had for eighteen years lived in the jungle close to the palace), and returned to the land where his first wife lived, and fetched her and the nine hundred and ninety-eight remaining wooden parrots to his father's kingdom. Then his father said to him, "Don't have any quarrelling with your half-brother after I am dead" (for his half-brother was son of the old Rajah's favourite wife). "I love you both dearly, and will give each of you half of my kingdom." So he divided the kingdom into two halves, and gave the one-half to the Panch-Phul Ranee's husband, who was the son of his first wife, and the other half to the eldest son of his second but favourite wife.

A short time after this arrangement was made, Panch-Phul Ranee said to her husband, "I wish to see my father and mother again before I die; let me go and see them." He answered, "You shall go, and I and our son will also go." So he called four of the wooden parrots — two to carry himself and the Ranee, and two to carry their son. Each pair of parrots crossed their wings; the young Prince sat upon the two wings of one pair; and on the wings of the other pair sat his father and mother. Then they all rose up in the air, and the parrots carried them (as they had before carried the Rajah alone), up, up, up, on, on, on, over the Red Sea, and across the seven seas, until they reached the Panch-Phul Ranee's country.

Panch-Phul Ranee's father saw them come flying through the air as quickly as shooting stars, and much wondering who they were, he sent out many of his nobles and chief officers to inquire.

The nobles went out to meet them, and called out, "What great Rajah is this who is dressed so royally, and comes flying through the air so fast? Tell us, that we may tell our Rajah."

The Rajah answered, "Go and tell your master that this is Panch-Phul Ranee's husband, come to visit his father-in-law." So they took that answer back to the palace, but when the Rajah heard it, he said, "I cannot tell what this means, for the Panch-Phul Ranee's husband died long ago. It is twenty years since he fell upon the iron spears and died; let us, however, all go and discover who this great Rajah really is." And he and all his court went out to meet the new-comers, just as the parrots had alighted close to the palace gate. The Panch-Phul Ranee took her son by the one hand and her husband by the other, and walking to meet her father, said, "Father, I have come to see you again. This is my husband who died, and this boy is my son." Then all the land was glad to see the Panch-Phul Ranee back, and the people said, "Our Princess is the most beautiful Princess in the world, and her husband is as handsome as she is, and her son is a fair boy; we will that they should always live among us and reign over us."

When they had rested a little, the Panch-Phul Ranee told her father and mother the story of all her adventures from the time she and her husband were left in the palkees in the jungle. And when they had heard it, her father said to the Rajah, her husband, "You must never go away again; for see, I have no son but you. You and your son must reign here after me. And behold, all this great kingdom will I now give you, if you will only stay with us; for I am old and weary of governing the land."

But the Rajah answered, "I must return once again to my own country, and then I will stay with you as long as I live."

So, leaving the Panch-Phul Ranee and her son with the old Rajah and Ranee, he mounted his parrots and once more returned to his father's land. And when he had reached it, he said to his mother, "Mother, my father-in-law has given me a kingdom ten thousand times larger than this. So I have but returned to bid you farewell and fetch my first wife, and then I must go back to live in that other land." She answered, "Very well; so you are happy anywhere, I am happy, too."

He then said to his half-brother, "Brother, my father-in-law has given me all the Panch-Phul Ranee's country, which is very far away; therefore I give up to you the half of this kingdom that my father gave to me." Then, bidding his father farewell, he took the Carpenter's daughter back with him (riding through the air on two of the wooden parrots, and followed by the rest) to the Panch-Phul Ranee's country, and there he and his two wives and his son lived very happily all their mortal days.

Schippeitaro

LONG, long ago, in the days of fairies and giants, ogres, and dragons, valiant knights and distressed damsels; in those good old days, a brave young warrior went out into the wide world in search of adventures.

For some time he went on without meeting with anything out of the common, but at length, after journeying through a thick forest, he found himself, one evening, on a wild and lonely mountain side. No village was in sight, no cottage, not even the hut of a charcoal burner, so often to be found on the outskirts of the forest. He had been following a faint and much overgrown path, but at length, even that was lost sight of. Twilight was coming on, and in vain he strove to recover the lost track. Each effort seemed only to entangle him more hopelessly in the briers and tall grasses which grew thickly on all sides. Faint and weary he stumbled on in the fast gathering darkness, until suddenly he came upon a little temple, deserted and half ruined, but which still contained a shrine. Here at least was shelter from the chilly dews, and here he resolved to pass the night. Food he had none, but, wrapped in his mantle, and with his good sword by his side, he lay down, and was soon fast asleep.

Toward midnight he was awakened by a dreadful noise. At first he thought it must be a dream, but the noise continued, the whole place resounding with the most terrible shrieks and yells. The young warrior raised himself cautiously, and seizing his sword, looked through a hole in the ruined wall. He beheld a strange and awful sight. A troop of hideous cats were engaged in a wild and horrible dance, their yells meanwhile echoing through the night. Mingled with their unearthly cries the young warrior could clearly distinguish the words:

Tell it not to Schippeitaro!
Listen for his bark!
Tell it not to Schippeitaro!
Keep it close and dark!

A beautiful clear full moon shed its light upon this grewsome scene, which the young warrior watched with amazement and horror. Suddenly, the midnight hour being passed, the phantom cats disappeared, and all was silence once more. The rest of the night passed undisturbed, and the young warrior slept soundly until morning. When he awoke the sun was already up, and he hastened to leave the scene of last night's adventure. By the bright morning light he presently discovered traces of a path which the evening before had been invisible. This he followed, and found to his great joy, that it led, not as he had feared, to the forest through which he had come the day before, but in the opposite direction, toward an open plain. There he saw one or two scattered cottages, and, a little farther on, a village. Pressed by hunger, he was making the best of his way toward the village, when he heard the tones of a woman's voice loud in lamentation and entreaty. No sooner did these sounds of distress reach the warrior's ears, than his hunger was forgotten, and he hurried on to the nearest cottage, to find out what was the matter, and if he could give any help. The people listened to his questions, and shaking their heads sorrowfully, told him that all help was vain. "Every year," said they, "the mountain spirit claims a victim. The time has come, and this very night will he devour our loveliest maiden. This is the cause of the wailing and lamentation." And when the young warrior, filled with wonder, inquired further, they told him that at sunset the victim would be put into a sort of cage, carried to that very ruined temple where he had passed the night, and there left alone. In the morning she would have vanished. So it was each year, and so it would be now; there was no help for it. As he listened, the young warrior was filled with an earnest desire to deliver the maiden. And, the mention of the ruined shrine having brought back to his mind the adventure of the night before, he asked the people whether they had ever heard the name of Schippeitaro, and who and what he was. "Schippeitaro is a strong and beautiful dog," was the reply; "he belongs to the head man of our Prince who lives only a little way from here. We often see him following his master; he is a fine, brave fellow." The young knight did not stop to ask more questions, but hurried off to Schippeitaro's master and begged him to lend his dog for one night. At first the man was unwilling, but at length agreed to lend Schippeitaro on condition that he should be brought back the next day. Overjoyed, the young warrior led the dog away.

Next he went to see the parents of the unhappy maiden, and told them to keep her in the house and watch her carefully until his return. He then placed the dog Schippeitaro in the cage which had been prepared for the maiden; and, with the help of some of the young men of the village, carried it to the ruined temple, and there set it down. The young men refused to stay one moment on that haunted spot, but hurried down the mountain as if the whole troop of hobgoblins had been at their heels. The young warrior, with no companion but the dog, remained to see what would happen. At midnight, when the full moon was high in the heaven, and shed her light over the mountain, came the phantom cats once more. This time they had in their midst a huge black tom-cat, fiercer and more terrible than all the rest, which the young warrior had no difficulty in knowing as the frightful mountain fiend himself. No sooner did this monster catch sight of the cage than he danced and sprang round it, with yells of triumph and hideous joy, followed by his companions. When he had long enough jeered at and taunted his victim, he threw open the door of the cage.

But this time he met his match. The brave Schippeitaro sprang upon him, and seizing him with his teeth, held him fast, while the young warrior with one stroke of his good sword laid the monster dead at his feet. As for the other cats, too much astonished to fly, they stood gazing at the dead body of their leader, and were made short work of by the knight and Schippeitaro. The young warrior brought back the brave dog to his master, with a thousand thanks, told the father and mother of the maiden that their daughter was free, and the people of the village that the fiend had claimed his last victim and would trouble them no more. "You owe all this to the brave Schippeitaro," he said as he bade them farewell, and went his way in search of fresh adventures.

*The Stoorworm**

ONCE upon a time there lived in Scotland a farmer who is known in folk-lore as the "Goodman of Leegarth." Although he was very humble, he owned a fertile tract of land in a valley that was watered by a burn and sheltered by towering hills. His wife was a thrifty and cleanly dame, who helped him to support a family of eight children, seven sons and one daughter.

The youngest of these children was a boy who received the nickname of "Pattle." Instead of being the favourite of the family, he was abused and neglected. His six brothers were especially cruel to him, and made him do all sorts of hard tasks. They beat and scolded him from morning till night, although he was a good-natured lad who never did any one harm.

Pattle wore the ragged garments that had been thrown away by his older brothers. Indeed, it was pitiful to see him running like a wild boy across the stone bridges, gathering peats for the fire, or sweeping the kitchen floor. No one gave him a word of cheer except his sister, who was one day rewarded for her kindness to him.

One day the Stoorworm came to the coast of Scotland and turned his great mouth toward the land, yawning frightfully. The Stoorworm was a mammoth sea-serpent, terrible to behold. He was so long that he reached half-way around the world, and his forked tongue was hundreds of miles in length. His eyes glowed like fire, and, when his great, hungry jaws came together, they made a noise that shook land and sea. This great monster could swallow a whole country the size of Scotland, and his hot breath could kill man and beast.

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* From "Fairy Tales from Folk-lore," by Herschel Williams. Copyright, 1908, by Moffat Yard & Company.

The people of Scotland were sorely distressed, for they knew that the Stoorworm had come to punish some terrible crime that had been committed there, and that he would not leave until the person who had sinned had been punished. So they stayed inside their homes and patiently awaited the time when the sinful person would be exposed and punished.

In truth, the Stoorworm had come to Scotland to destroy the wicked Queen; but no one knew it at that time. She was a selfish, treacherous woman who had no respect for her husband or her step-daughter; but she was so deceitful that she made everyone think that she loved them devotedly.

A cruel Sorcerer came to the court one day to see the King. Although he was an ill-looking creature, with a long beard and crooked limbs, the Queen fell in love with him, and plotted with him to overthrow her husband, that they might rule Scotland together. So it was not much wonder that the terrible Stoorworm had set up his head in the land, for when the rulers of a country become so sinful, it is well that they should be removed.

One morning the King came to the house of the Goodman of Leegarth. Pattle, who was working in the kitchen, saw him; but his mother would not let him go into the room where the King was, saying that the boy was too dirty to meet royalty. The King said that he had come to Leegarth to take the only daughter of the house to his court.

"I have a daughter named Gemdelovely," said the King. "I want her to have a sure and trusty attendant, and I have been told that your daughter is one of the finest girls in Scotland. Prepare her for the journey, and I will take her back with me."

The farmer and his wife were delighted when they learned that their daughter was to be a maid of the beautiful Princess Gemdelovely. The mother got her few dresses and packed them into a bundle as quickly as possible. The goodman made her a pair of rivlins, or rough cow-hide sandals, and gave them to the girl. She was very much pleased, for rivlins were very fashionable in those days.

When Pattle bade his sister good-bye, he burst into tears, saying: "Alas! You are the only one that has been kind to me, and now you are to be taken away."

She kissed him tenderly, and rode away with the King, while poor Pattle returned to the kitchen to carry out the ashes.

But the King was sad at heart, for the Stoorworm kept reaching out his long tongue farther and farther, and he knew that something must be done.

One evening he called his high officials and all the court together. In the midst of their conversation, while they were planning to rid the country of the sea monster, the Queen came in and said:

"Ye are all brave men and brave warriors when ye have only men to face, but now ye deal with a foe that laughs at your strength, and before him your weapons are as straw. It is not by sword or spear but by the power of sorcery that the monster can be overcome. Take counsel with the great Sorcerer who knoweth all things, for wisdom wins where strength fails."

The King, who never had liked the Sorcerer, at first refused to give him a hearing; but the pleadings of the faithless Queen were finally successful. The Sorcerer was called before the King, and on bended knee he said:

"Indeed, this is a great question and hard to answer, but I will give counsel in the morning."

At the appointed hour the Sorcerer again appeared before the King and his court and said:

"The only thing to do to save Scotland is to feed the Stoorworm, each week, seven of the most beautiful maidens in the land. If the monster be not satisfied with the offering, there is still another remedy; but it is so horrible that it dare not be uttered unless the first plan fails."

The King and his court were filled with grief, but the wicked Queen was happy. It was she who had told the Sorcerer to suggest such an awful plan, for she wanted all the comely maidens destroyed that she might be considered the most beautiful woman in the land.

But as the Stoorworm kept throwing out his forked tongue farther and farther, withering the grass and the foliage with his fiery breath, the king decided to send seven beautiful maidens to the water's edge every Saturday, to be swallowed by the monster. Scotland never before or since has been so sad and miserable.

Pattle, in the meantime, was much worried, for he feared that the time would come when his beloved sister would be offered up to the Stoorworm; but he pretended to be brave.

"I am not afraid," he said one night to his eldest brother. "I myself would willingly fight the hideous monster."

His brother gave him a kick and told him to go back to the house and take out the ashes, while his other brothers pelted him with stones, declaring that he was the most stupid creature that ever lived.

On the same evening the goodman's wife sent Pattle to the barn to call his brothers to supper. They threw him upon the floor, covered him with straw, and would have smothered him, had not his father appeared in time.

At supper the farmer rebuked his sons for their harsh treatment of Pattle. He said that if they wronged him again he would punish them severely.

"You needed not to have come to my help, father," said Pattle, "for I could have fought them all and would have beaten every one of them, if I had wanted to do so."

"Why did n't you try?" asked the goodman.

"Because I wanted to save my strength, that I might fight the Stoorworm," replied Pattle.

At this the entire family began to laugh, and scornfully the father said:

"You 'll fight the Stoorworm when I make spoons from the horns of the moon."

That same evening the King called his high officials and all the court before him. Every one had complained because of the fate that threatened all the beautiful girls of the land, and the hearts of the people were crushed. After a short conversation the King called the Sorcerer.

"Woe! woe!" cried the King, who was bent and haggard.

"The Stoorworm is still in the land. Thou hast told a falsehood and thy head shall pay for it."

"With cruel sorrow do I say it, but there is only one more remedy," replied the Sorcerer, grovelling upon the floor at the King's feet. "I would that I never had lived to see the day when I would have to tell so dire a remedy! The King's daughter, the Princess Gemdelovely, must be given to the Stoorworm. Then shall the monster leave the land!"

"She is my only child!" cried the King, trembling and turning deathly pale. "She is my dearest on earth. She is to be my heir. Yet if her death can save my country, let her be offered up to the Stoorworm. It becomes her well that the last of the oldest race in all the land should die for the welfare of the people."

"If the monster then doth not disappear, the Sorcerer will be the next victim!" cried one of the high officials.

All the court set up a shout, and declared that, if this plan failed, the Sorcerer should not live to make another one.

The King then asked that Gemdelovely be permitted to remain with him three weeks longer. He forthwith sent messengers throughout the land and all the neighbouring kingdoms, proclaiming that he would offer his daughter in marriage to the brave man that would free Scotland from the Stoorworm.

The Queen, who had laid the cruel plan to rid herself of her stepdaughter, told the Sorcerer to have no fear, for whatever fate befell him she would share it with him.

It is said that thirty-six great warriors set out to fight the Stoorworm and win the beautiful Princess Gemdelovely; but twelve of them became sick at the mere sight of the terrible monster, twelve more were so much frightened that they fled to other lands, and the remaining twelve lingered about the palace, fearing to undertake the task.

On the night before the Princess Gemdelovely was to be offered to the Stoorworm, the King gave a supper in his palace to his faithful friends and companions. When they had all gone but his chamberlain, the King opened the great chest on which he had been sitting and took out a large sword.

"Why take that sword from the chest?" asked the chamberlain. "Fourscore years will it be to-morrow since thou camest into the world, and many a brave deed hast thou done in that time; but thy day for fighting is over. Let the sword rest; thou art too old to wield it now."

"Wheesht!" cried the King, "or I 'll try my strength on thy body. Thinkest thou that I, a descendant of the great god Odin, would see my bairn devoured by a monster, and not strike a blow to defend her? This sword and I shall perish before my daughter dies. Hasten thee to the shore at dawn; prepare my boat with masts up; set sail ready to hoist, with her bow seaward; and guard her till I come. It is the last service thou wilt ever do for me — good night, old comrade."

Meanwhile Pattle lay upon his rough, hard bed, pretending to be asleep. All the time he was thinking of the great curse upon the land, and trying to make a plan to drive the Stoorworm from the Scottish shores.

Finally he heard his father and mother talking in the next room; he could not keep from listening to what they said.

"Are you all going to see the Princess Gemdelovely offered up to the Stoorworm to-morrow?" asked the dame.

"Indeed, goodwife, and thou wilt go with us," replied the goodman.

"I do not think I shall; I am not able to walk, and I do not care to ride alone," said the dame rather peevishly.

"Thou needest not ride alone. I 'll take thee behind me and ride on Teetgong, the fastest horse in the land," said the goodman.

"Why wouldest thou care to take an old wife like me behind thee? The people will see us and laugh at thee," said the dame.

"Dost thou think there is one in all the world I would rather have sit behind me than my own wife?" asked the goodman tenderly.

"I do not know; but I have sometimes thought that thou dost not love me as thou shouldst," said the dame with a sigh.

"What puts such notions in thy head? Thou knowest that I love thee better than anyone on earth. What did I ever do or say to make thee think that I do not love thee?" said the goodman.

"It is not what thou sayest, but what thou wilt not say that makes me doubt thee," said the dame. "For four years I have begged thee to tell me why Teetgong goes so fast, and thou wilt not tell me. I might as well ask a stone wall."

"I'll tell thee the whole secret," said the goodman in a low voice. "When I want Teetgong to stand still I clap him on the shoulder. When I wish to ride fairly fast I clap him twice on the right side. When I desire him to go at full speed I blow through the windpipe of a goose. I keep the windpipe in the right-hand pocket of my coat. Now complain no more, for I have told thee all."

Pattle heard every word that was spoken, and, as soon as his father and mother were asleep, he stole out of bed, took the goose's windpipe from his father's coat, went to the stable, bridled Teetgong, and mounted him.

The horse began to prance madly, but Pattle clapped him on the shoulder, and he stood as still as though he were carved from a block of granite. Then he clapped the horse twice on the right side, and away he went; but the horse gave a loud neigh that awoke the goodman. In a few minutes he and his six oldest sons learned that Teetgong had been stolen. They mounted the horses and galloped after Pattle at full speed, shouting, "Stop thief! Stop thief!"

Teetgong heard his master's voice and stood still. Pattle thought that he would be caught and beaten within an inch of his life; but in time he thought of the goose's windpipe. He took it from his pocket and blew with all his might. Teetgong hoisted his ears and flew like wind. The goodman and his sons gave up the chase, and returned to Leegarth to tell the constable.

Pattle did not clap the horse's side till he came to the seashore. Then he tethered Teetgong and wandered about till he came to a humble cottage. An old woman was inside, fast asleep before the fireplace. He took an iron kettle, filled it with peat fire, and returned to the shore.

Then he saw the King's boat afloat, fastened to a big stone on the beach. In the boat sat a man who was to watch till the King came.

"This is a nippy morning, sir," said Pattle politely.

"Ay, sir," replied the man very sleepily. "I've sat here all night long till the marrow of my bones is frozen."

"Why can't you come on shore and warm yourself at my fire?" asked Pattle.

"Because if the King's chamberlain finds me out of the boat, he will kill me," answered the man.

Pattle made the fire in the kettle burn brightly, and began searching for clams. After scraping the soil for some time he shouted:

"My stars! gold! gold! As sure as I am the son of my mother, there's gold in this earth?"

The boatman jumped ashore, and began to dig in the soil, fairly overthrowing Pattle. But Pattle seized the kettle of coals, loosened the boat rope, jumped into the boat, and pushed out to sea. In vain the man raved and threatened, for Pattle only laughed at him for being so foolish, so greedy, and so negligent of his duty.

The boy hoisted the sail and made for the head of the monster Stoorworm. The great beast was asleep, but when he heard Pattle he opened his fiery eyes, and, lifting his head, thrust out his horrible tongue. But Pattle was braver than anyone that had ever seen the Stoorworm. He took down the sail and let the boat drift.

When the sun came up, the Stoorworm yawned seven times. With every yawn a tide of water surged into his mouth; and at last he swallowed the boat.

Pattle thought that his adventure was at an end. But what was his surprise to find that he was sailing smoothly down the big throat of the monster and that all about him was a soft, silvery light. On and on he went, steering his boat in midstream, the water becoming more and more shallow all the time.

At last the keel of the boat struck something, which proved to be the liver of the Stoorworm.

Pattle bored a great hole in the liver and emptied the kettle of hot coals inside of it. Soon the flames began to belch forth, and Pattle hastened back to the boat. With great difficulty he made his way up the stream to the mouth of the monster. But the mast snapped in twain; and, after being tossed about till he was unconscious, Pattle was thrown upon dry land, not far from where he had stolen the boat.

When he had regained his senses, he saw that a vast throng of people had gathered around him, including the King, his beautiful daughter Gemdelovely, and all the court of Scotland. They all gave shouts of joy when he opened his eyes and stared wonderingly at them.

Then a horrible thing happened. Great clouds of smoke came from the Stoorworm's mouth. The monster rolled his eyes and lolled out his forked tongue in terrible agony, roaring like all the winds of the ocean together. Some historians say that he shook land and sea and caused the moon to shift several inches.

At last his great tongue fell to the earth and cut a deep gash, making the sea that divides Denmark from Norway and Sweden. Then he drew in his tongue and shook his head, again causing the world to tremble and change about as though it were being shattered by an earthquake. Some of his teeth flew out into the ocean, where they became the Orkney Islands; still other teeth flew out, and changed into the Shetland and Faroe Islands. Then he coiled himself into a solid, dead mass, and became what is now known as Iceland. It is said that the kettle of peat fire still burns in the monster's liver, and that is what causes the burning mountains of Iceland.

When the Stoorworm was dead and his head was no longer turned to the land, Pattle, the most neglected lad in all the kingdom, was welcomed as the great deliverer of the people. The King took him in his arms, kissed and blessed him, and called him his son, the future King of Scotland. He gave him the magic sword that had always belonged to the royal family of Scotland, and told him to hasten to the palace.

Pattle mounted Teetgong and hastened away, followed by the people, who shouted: "Long live the Prince of Scotland, the Destroyer of the Stoorworm!"

Never before had he known what peace was, and his heart seemed to be bursting with happiness, especially when his dear sister came running from the palace and fell upon his bosom, weeping with joy and pride.

When the Princess Gemdelovely met Pattle and his sister on the terrace, the latter said to her:

"Great disgrace as well as honour has fallen upon the throne of Scotland to-day. The wicked Sorcerer, who has caused the country so much sorrow, and the Queen of Scotland have run away together. They left the palace an hour ago; but they were so frightened that they cannot be more than a league away."

The Princess Gemdelovely told the King what had happened, and he was filled with rage.

"So it was the wretched Queen and the vile Sorcerer that made the innocent suffer! Oh, that I had a man that could ride fast enough to overtake them!"

"I will go," said Pattle, and without waiting to hear another word, he blew through the goose's windpipe, and Teetgong dashed away with all his might. In a few minutes Pattle captured the Queen and the Sorcerer, whose horses were slow indeed compared with Teetgong.

The Sorcerer drew his sword and struck at Pattle, but the brave lad grasped the magic sword the King had given him, and slew him.

Then he seized the Queen and carried her back to her husband. Before the King and his court she confessed her guilt and begged for mercy.

She was sent to the tower prison to spend the rest of her days; but Pattle was clothed in the garments of a prince, and great events were given in his honour.

When he was married to the beautiful Princess Gemdelovely, his parents and brothers, in their best clothes, were present. They begged him to forgive them for their unkindness to him, which he did; but he said that next to his wife he would cherish his sister, because she had been kind to him when he was a poor, neglected boy; and that they should learn never to scorn the dullest lad, for very often such boys, by making the most of opportunities, become the greatest men.

It is further recorded that Pattle became King of Scotland, and, with Gemdelovely, ruled for many happy, prosperous years.

King Tongue

THE King of Persia was very ill, and all the remedies of his doctors had no effect on him whatever. At last he grew impatient with them and summoned all his physicians before him.

"Where is your boasted skill?" he asked. "For months now have I lain on this bed of sickness. I am weary with lying here; I feel like a helpless and wounded beast left alone in the fastness of the forest. Be heedful. If your medicines have no effect upon me within a week, you shall pay forfeit with your lives. Not one of you shall live."

"We have done our best," said one of the physicians, in a trembling voice, "but your illness is so unusual."

"What matters that?" cried the King in a rage. "Are ye not unusual men — physicians?"

"Sire," said one of the young physicians, coming forward, "'t is my belief that your Majesty is not ill, but bewitched."

"Then you must remove the spell that is over me; I command it," returned the King. "Are not physicians magicians of the art of healing?"

"Truly so, sire," answered the young physicians, "and with your leave we will cure you. But it will not be easy."

"What mean you?" questioned the King, in surprise. "What difficulties can be placed in the way of the desires of the ruler of Persia?"

"But listen, your Majesty," returned the physician. "It is a fairy cure which I suggest for your strange illness. Your Majesty must drink the milk of a lioness — if it can be obtained."

"So that is the difficulty," said the King thoughtfully. "Are there no brave men in Persia who will undertake this great task?"

"I will undertake it, gracious Majesty," said a young officer of the guards standing by the throne.

"You are a brave man," said the King, glancing with admiration at the handsome and sturdy young officer who stood before him. "If successful, you shall not go unrewarded. Should you fail, your courage shall not be forgotten."

The officer knelt at the feet of the King, kissed the hem of his royal robe, and immediately started on his dangerous mission.

"Be heedful," whispered the young physician to him. "The fairies give not their remedies to human beings easily. They may lead you into greater danger than the lioness from whom you must obtain the milk. Above all, drink not of the milk yourself."

"Fear not for me," laughed the young officer; "the life of my King is at stake. Why should I think of dangers? They are made but to be overcome by those who have daring."

Carefully selecting his weapons and his followers, the young officer started off, taking with him half a dozen sheep. All the people followed him to the gates of the city to wish him success.

The young officer and his men plunged immediately into a dense forest infested with wild animals of all kinds. They had to proceed cautiously, and they were instructed to take the life of no beast. At night they built a big fire to keep away the animals, and half of the party kept watch, while the other half slept. Toward early morning, the roaring of a lion was heard and the officer was quickly awakened. Selecting half a dozen men and taking two sheep and a strong net, he crept slowly through the tangled undergrowth of the forest in the direction of the roaring.

Soon they came to a clearing where a lion was struggling with an antelope. In a few minutes the struggle ceased and the lion commenced to feed on his prey.

"He will take some food to his partner, the lioness," said the officer. "Then we shall follow."

But the lion was evidently very hungry, and devoured the whole of the antelope. Then he lay down to sleep. It was now nearly daylight, and the young officer was puzzled what to do. Suddenly a noise was heard, and a huge, yellow body was seen creeping through the long jungle grasses. It was a lioness. She was followed by three tiny cubs.

"Quick, a sheep," exclaimed the officer, and a poor lamb was tied to a long rope and pushed out of the grass into the clearing. It was some minutes before the lioness saw the sheep, and then with an angry roar she sprang upon it and killed it with a blow. Seizing it in her mouth, she was about to carry it off, but the officer, who had crept as near as he dared, suddenly flung his net with unerring aim. It caught the lioness's head and her two fore-feet. Finding herself entangled, she turned toward the officer, but just then one of his men flung another net which caught her hind-legs. The ropes were tightened quickly, and in a few moments the huge beast lay helpless on the ground.

"Two of you go and kill the lion while he sleeps," said the officer. "One of you run back to the camp and bring the other men and all the ropes we have. Our work is not yet half done."

Half a dozen more men soon appeared from the camp, and stealthily approaching the struggling lioness, they threw more nets round her. One of them went quite near and deftly slipped a noose round her fore-legs and another round her hind-legs. The other ends of these ropes they tied to trees to make the lioness lie still. She was still dangerous, however, for she had bitten the net about her mouth and she snarled and roared fearfully. Taking the dead sheep, the officer stuck it on a spear and thrust it into the lioness's open mouth. He ordered one of the men to hold it there, and then he proceeded to try to milk the animal. She still struggled, and half the milk was spilt, but he managed to fill four leathern bottles.

"Let us leave the lioness as she is," he said. "It would not be fair to kill her after she has been of such use to us. She will free herself in time. We shall not kill the cubs either. They seem frightened, poor things. Let us take one. The mother will be able to attend to the other two in a few hours."

With the precious milk carefully guarded, the hunters began their return. But the men were tired, and when the sun rose and shone fiercely, they could scarcely walk.

"I, too, feel tired," said the officer, at last. "Let us sleep for a while and then continue our journey when the sun is less strong in the afternoon."

The men were very grateful for this, and in a few moments nearly all of them were fast asleep in the shade of a big banyan tree. Only the officer and one man, who was ordered to keep guard, were awake.

"It is strange that I cannot sleep, although I am so tired," mused the officer. "Perhaps I ought not to sleep, but ought to get back to the Palace as quickly as possible."

He looked at the leathern bottles containing the lioness's milk.

"I wonder what it tastes like," he said, opening one. "I suppose I ought to take every drop to the King. But I should just like to taste it. Let me see, did not the physician warn me that I must not taste it? I wonder why. Perhaps it is for kings only. Perhaps it will make me a king. He said there was magic in it. I will taste it."

He put the bottle to his lips and then quickly put it down.

"How strange!" he said. "If I did not know that this was the milk of a lioness, I should say it was like strong wine. It has made me feel quite drowsy."

The next minute the officer's head fell heavily to the ground. He was fast asleep.

In his sleep the officer had a strange dream. Every part of his body seemed to have got separated, and all parts were quarrelling.

"We deserve all the credit," said the two legs, proudly standing up. "We carried the officer to the place where the lioness was. Without us he could have done nothing."

"Don't talk nonsense," said the hands, shaking themselves menacingly. "We threw the net that entangled the lioness. Then we milked the beast. It is we who deserve all the credit."

"Both of you are wrong," said the eyes, blinking, as if they could not keep themselves awake. "We saw the lioness, we directed your footsteps, feet, and your movements, hands."

The feet looked like getting ready to kick, one of the hands clenched itself into a fist, and it appeared as if a fight was inevitable.

"Listen to me," said the heart in a throbbing voice. "You all claim too much. After all, it was I who inspired the idea. Had it not been for me, the impulse would never have entered the officer's mind to undertake the task."

"Which reminds me," said the mind thoughtfully, "that I deserve the most credit. It is one thing to get hold of an impulse, but it is another to put it into force. I made up the officer's mind and made him suggest that he would get the milk. Is it not so?"

The legs, the hands, the eyes and the heart seemed abashed for a moment, and the tongue took advantage of the silence to burst out with the remark that he was chiefly responsible for the great enterprise.

"Rubbish!" exclaimed the others angrily. "You don't know what you are talking about. You wag because you can't help it. You stop in your little prison, the mouth, or we shall tell our friends, the teeth, to bite you."

The tongue thrust itself out very pointedly.

"Just you be careful," it said. "You are all very clever, and I am a prisoner, of course. But I warn you not to offend me. If I take my revenge, you will all get hurt. And then you will see that I am more important than all of you."

"Don't talk so much," retorted the others, but before another word could be said, the officer showed signs of waking, and the hands and feet and the other parts of the body took their proper places.

"What a funny dream!" exclaimed the officer, waking up. "And oh! how my head does ache. I ought not to have tasted that milk."

When he got up he found that he could not walk quite steadily, and the journey to the city took longer than he expected. A great crowd awaited him at the gates. They cheered him, they carried him shoulder high, they decorated the city, and in every way manifested their great joy.

"Our King will soon be well again, thanks to the brave officer," they cried, and a public holiday was proclaimed.

The officer was brought before the King, holding the leathern bottles containing the milk in his hand.

"Have you succeeded?" inquired the King anxiously.

The officer seemed dazed and unsteady. He pressed his hands to his head; then suddenly holding out the bottles he said, huskily:

"Here, your Majesty, I have brought — I have brought your Majesty the milk of the dog."

"The dog! What mean you, slave?" cried the King in a rage.

"I don't know," replied the officer unsteadily.

"Cast the slave into a dungeon cell and bind him with strong chains," cried the King. "I will teach him to play such pranks with me."

His attendants obeyed, and the officer was put in irons and locked in a dark prison cell.

"I shall surely be put to death," he said to himself, and at the thought of this, he trembled all over.

Then it seemed to him that his hands and feet were talking again.

"We shall have to walk to the scaffold," said the feet.

"And I shall have to stop beating," said the heart.

The tongue, however, was not sorrowful at all.

"Did I not warn you all?" it said. "I told you to be careful. Will you not admit now that I have more power than any of you? I am king of the body. Just see what I have done with one little word. I simply said 'dog' instead of 'lioness,' and you are all imprisoned."

"Suppose we acknowledge your power," said the hands, "will you help us out of this great trouble?"

"Yes, I will," replied the tongue. "At least, I'll try hard. But you must all keep quiet."

This they agreed to do, and when the prisoner was brought before the King for sentence, the tongue asked for permission to say a few words. The request was granted, and then the tongue displayed all its powers of eloquence.

"O mighty King, live forever," it exclaimed, "and have mercy on me, thy slave who risked his life in thy service. O mighty ruler of this great land, be thou truly great in all attributes of Majesty, and spare the life of him who thought not of his own in thy hour of need. I ask not for reward for my service; I ask only that my life should be spared that I may devote it to thee."

"I have heard you patiently," returned the King, sorrowfully, "and it grieves me to have to utter the dread sentence of death. But where has been your great service? Did you not bring dog's milk and not the milk of a lioness?"

"It is not so, gracious Majesty," the officer replied. "The milk is truly that of a lioness. Those who were with me can vouchsafe for that. I tasted it. That was my sin. For that I have been punished. It was like strong wine. It made me giddy, and in my eagerness to tell thee, my tongue played me false. It was but a slip, sire; the words 'dog' and 'lioness' are so much alike in Persian. Put the milk to the test. A dog, I swear, will not touch it, but will fly from its mere smell."

The King was thoughtful for a while. Then he ordered one of his dogs to be brought. A little of the milk was poured from one of the leathern bottles and put before the dog. No sooner did the animal put its nose to the saucer, however, than it gave a great growl of fear and fled quickly from the room.

"It is not dog's milk," said the physician who had suggested the milk of a lioness to the King. "That is clear. But we can make an even better test. One of the men brought a lion cub back with him. Will your Majesty permit that this milk be offered to the cub?"

The cub was brought, and it lapped the milk very greedily.

"You are pardoned," said the King to the officer, "and for your bravery you shall be rewarded."

The milk of the lioness soon cured the King of his illness, and afterward, whenever the young officer lay down to sleep, he always imagined that he heard the tongue say to the other parts of the body:

"You see, I am King. I have great powers both for good and evil."

The officer guarded his tongue as well as his King, after that, and he was promoted to be chief of the guard. In that high position he lived happily until the end of his days.

*The Child of the Thunder**

IN AMONG the hills of Echizen, within sight of the snowy mountain called Hakuzan, lived a farmer named Bimbo. He was very poor, but frugal and industrious; and he was fond of children though he had none himself. He longed to adopt a son to bear his name, and often talked the matter over with his wife, but, being so dreadfully poor, both thought it best not to adopt any, until they had bettered their condition and increased the area of their land, for all the property Bimbo owned was the earth in a little gully, which he himself was reclaiming. A tiny rivulet, flowing from a spring in the crevice of the rocks above, after trickling over the boulders, rolled down the gully to join a brook in the larger valley below. Bimbo had with great labour, after many years, made dams or terraces of stone, inside which he had thrown soil, partly got from the mountain sides, but mainly carried in baskets on the backs of himself and his wife, from the valley below. By such weary toil, continued year in and year out, small beds of soil were formed, in which rice could be planted and grown. The little rivulet supplied the needful water; for rice, the daily food of labourer and farmer, must be planted and cultivated in soft mud under water. So the little rivulet, which once leaped over the rock and cut its way singing to the valley, now spread itself quietly over each terrace, making more than a dozen descents before it reached the fields below.

Yet, after all his toil for a score of years, working every day from the first croak of the raven, until the stars came out, Bimbo and his wife owned less than an acre of terrace land. Sometimes a summer would pass, and little or no rain fall; then the rivulet dried up and crops failed. It seemed all in vain that their backs were bent and their foreheads seamed and wrinkled with care. Many a time did Bimbo have hard work of it even to pay his taxes, which sometimes amounted to half his crop. Many a time did he shake his head, muttering the discouraged farmer's proverb: "A new field gives a scant crop," the words of which mean also, "Human life is but fifty years."

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*From "The Fire-fly's Lovers," by William Elliot Griffis. Copyright, 1908, by T. Y. Crowell & Company.

One summer day after a long drought, when the young rice sprouts were turning yellow at the tips, the clouds began to gather and roll, and soon a smart shower fell, the lightning glittered, and the hills echoed with claps of thunder. But Bimbo, hoe in hand, was so glad to see the rain fall, and the pattering drops felt so cool and refreshing, that he worked on, strengthening the terrace to resist the little flood about to come.

Pretty soon the storm rattled very near him, and he thought he had better seek shelter, lest the thunder should strike and kill him. For Bimbo, like all his neighbours, had often heard stories of the shaggy god of the thunder-drums, who lives in the skies and rides on the storm, and sometimes kills people by throwing out of the clouds at them a terrible creature like a cat, with iron-like claws and a hairy body.

Just as Bimbo threw his hoe over his shoulder and started to move, a terrible blinding flash of lightning dazzled his eyes. It was immediately followed by a deafening crash, and the thunder fell just in front of him. He covered his eyes with his hands, but finding himself unhurt, uttered a prayer of thanks to Buddha for safety. Then he uncovered his eyes and looked down at his feet.

There lay a little boy, rosy and warm, crowing in the most lively manner, and not frightened by the rain in the least. The farmer's eyes opened very wide, but, happy and nearly surprised out of his senses, he picked up the child tenderly in his arms, and took him home to his old wife.

"Here is a gift from Heaven," said Bimbo; "we'll adopt him as our own son and call him Raitaro," which means "the child of the thunder."

The wife also was delighted with the pretty boy, and never tired of caring for him, so Raitaro lived with them and became a very dutiful and loving child. He was as kind and obedient to his foster-parents as though he had been born in their house. He never liked to play with other children, but kept all day in the fields with his foster-father, sporting with the rivulet and looking at the clouds and sky. Even when the strolling players and the "Lion of Corea" came into the village, and every boy and girl and nurse and woman was sure to be out in great glee, the child of the thunder stayed up in the field, or climbed on the high rocks to watch the sailing of the birds and the flowing of the water and the river far away.

And now great prosperity came to the farmer, and he laid it all to the sweet child who had fallen to him from the clouds. It was very curious that rain often fell on Bimbo's field when none fell elsewhere; so that Bimbo grew rich. He believed that the boy Raitaro beckoned to the clouds, and they shed their rain for him alone.

A good many summers passed by, and Raitaro had grown to be a tall and handsome lad, almost a man and eighteen years old. On his birthday the old farmer and the good wife made a little feast for their foster-child. They ate and drank and talked of the thunder-storm, out of which Raitaro was born.

Finally the young man said solemnly:

"My dear parents, I thank you very much for your kindness to me, but I must now say farewell. I hope you will always be happy."

Then, in a moment, before they had a chance to ask him what he meant, all trace of a human form had disappeared, and floating in the air they saw a tiny white dragon, which hovered for a moment above them and then flew away. The old couple ran out of doors to watch it, and it seemed to their astonished gaze to grow larger as it went away. Bigger and bigger it grew, taking its course to the hills above, where the piled-up white clouds, which form on a summer's afternoon, seemed built up like towers and castles of silver. Toward one of these the dragon moved until, as they watched his form, now grown to a mighty size, it disappeared from view.

The farmer and his wife knelt in reverence and said farewell, with tears in their eyes, yet with a strange peace in their hearts. After this, as they were now old and white-headed, they ceased from their toil and lived in comfort all the rest of their days. When they died their ashes were laid away in the cemetery of the temple yard, and their tomb was carved in the form of a white dragon, which in spite of mosses and lichens, may still be seen among the ancient monuments of the little hamlet.

Two Moqui Heroes[*]

A LONG time ago, when there were no white people in the United States, the Moqui Indians lived on a green, grassy mesa in the Great West. They were a rich and powerful nation, very kind to one another, although they fought their foes with a strength and skill that could not be excelled by any other tribe.

They owned all the country from the mountains to the Great River, and within this vast territory was an abundance of buffaloes, deer, fish, and other varieties of food that Indians like. They were a thrifty and progressive nation, and lived in wigwams that in winter were snugly lined with the skins of wild animals.

This ancient race of Indians have transmitted to us some of the oldest folk-lore stories in the world — fairy tales that were old before Christopher Columbus discovered America. Many, many years ago, the little Indian children, scattered all over the continent, listened with breathless interest to the tales of two great Moqui braves; for Indian children love romantic stories about ogres and giants and deeds of magic quite as well as we do.

The names of these two Moqui heroes were White Corn and Lolomi. White Corn had a very long Indian name, which no one who is wise would try to pronounce, so modern story-tellers have translated it into English.

These lads were great friends. Lolomi, above all things else, desired to be strong and brave, and to do mighty deeds that would benefit his race. On the other hand, White Corn desired to be a learned man, that he might instruct and civilize his people. If you will closely follow this story, you will see how both of them, because of their willingness to overcome all obstacles, attained what they most desired.

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[*] From "Fairy Tales from Folk-lore," by Herschel Williams. Copyright, 1908, by Moffat, Yard & Company.

White Corn was the youngest of seven bachelor brothers, who were all brave and good men. They lived in a large log house at the edge of the great mesa, and were as comfortable and happy as they could be. The names of the six older brothers were Red Corn, Blue Corn, Yellow Corn, Black Corn, Green Corn, and Spotted Corn.

One day they decided that White Corn must seek him a wife, for they had become quite vexed because their friends ridiculed them for not getting married.

White Corn did not wish to marry a Moqui maiden, so he made up his mind to travel in search of a wife — one who would be wise enough to help him educate his people.

Before setting out upon his journey, he went down to a beautiful stream near his home, and called upon Daw-wa, the Sun Chief.

"O Daw-wa, Father!" he cried, beating his breast, as was the custom when the Sun Chief was invoked. "I have been sent from home, and my heart is breaking. I am weary, Father; I pray thee give me rest. Give me a home where my heart will once more be filled with the joyous song of the lark, and not with the sad song of the dove. Let me find wisdom, that I may enlighten my people."

Daw-wa appeared at once, and said:

"Do as I bid thee, my son, and thou shalt be rewarded. Set out upon thy journey, ever keeping thy face turned toward me. Take with thee these four plume-sticks and this bag of magic meal that I have brought. Ere long thou wilt come to a great lake. At its border thou wilt find some roots and herbs, which thou must eat; they will stay thy hunger for many days. Tie the four plume-sticks together and place them upon the water. Get aboard the raft that will appear, and, at the end of four days, sail away. Do not set thy foot upon land until Wapa, the Great Serpent, shall bid thee."

White Corn bowed low, took the plume-sticks and the sack of magic meal, and returned to his home. When all his brothers had gone, he set forth on his journey, following the sun in the Great West.

For several days he tramped wearily along, until he reached the lake, of which Daw-wa had spoken. He dug up the roots and herbs that grew close to its brink, and ate them. Then he tied four plume-sticks together and placed them upon the water. In the wink of an eye they changed into a raft sheltered by a canopy of feathers.

White Corn was delighted with the beautiful vessel, but, as Daw-wa had requested, he did not continue his journey until four days had passed away. Then he sprang aboard, and the raft began to move swiftly and smoothly. To White Corn it was a wonderful craft, for he had never seen one that would move without the assistance of oars.

For several days he travelled, feeling neither hunger nor fatigue. One day at sunset a buzzard lit upon the raft, and flapped its wings three times.

"Be not afraid of anything that thou wilt see, brave Son of the Moquis," said the bird. "I have come from the land of the Great Serpent to warn thee to be brave."

Having delivered its message, the buzzard flew away to the west, leaving White Corn more curious and anxious than before, yet very glad that he was to meet the Great Serpent; for Indians always regarded the serpent as the emblem of wisdom.

A few days later the raft began to rock as though it were in a great storm. White Corn was beginning to get seasick, when, suddenly, the vessel was thrown high in the air, and fell to the earth close to the edge of the water. To his amazement the raft began to get smaller and smaller until it changed into the plume-sticks that Daw-wa had had given him.

White Corn picked them up, and wandered away toward the sun, without any thought of giving up the long journey.

Although the little Indian children were fond of romance and mystery, they liked humour, too, as is shown in this strange tale after White Corn leaves the raft; for he came face to face with a queer old man that carried a crook.

"Good morning," said White Corn pleasantly.

But the old man only bounded up and down like a jumping-jack, and, quick as a wink, fastened his crook about White Corn's neck. Then he started on a brisk run, pulling White Corn after him. The poor boy never had known that an old man could run so fast; but he did not complain, although his neck felt as though it would break.

They had run fully a hundred miles without stopping to take a breath, when an unusual thing happened. Although the sun was shining brightly, a bolt of lightning came from the sky and struck the old man. He fell in a heap. For a moment White Corn was glad of it and, clutching his plume-sticks and sack of magic meal, he started to run away, without waiting to see if his companion were killed.

When he had run a hundred feet or more, he looked back and saw that the old man was sitting up, fumbling with the few hairs on the top of his head; then he began to motion for White Corn to come back. When the lad reached the queer creature's side, he, for the first time, perceived that the old man had neither a mouth nor a nose.

"Take the black stone that lies yonder and make a mouth for your guide," said the buzzard who had alighted on the bough of a tree near by.

White Corn picked up the black stone and slashed the old man's face, making a crooked mouth that grinned in a most ghastly manner.

"How nice it is to be able to talk!" cried the old man, and then he began to giggle and laugh and scream until White Corn was sorry he had made a mouth for him.

Placing his arm about White Corn's waist, he began to run as hard as he could, all the time singing silly songs and laughing at the top of his voice. At last they reached a stream where another queer thing happened. Suddenly the old man stood still; then he began to shout at the top of his voice again, all the time growing smaller until at last he floated away and disappeared like a piece of paper that has been burned in a bonfire.

White Corn was very glad to be rid of him, and vowed that never again would he make a mouth for any person. He took the sack of magic meal and sprinkled it upon the water.

Almost immediately a serpent crawled from the bushes and held up its head. White Corn was not afraid of snakes, and this one was so beautiful, he stood agape in admiration, for it was covered with diamonds, emeralds, garnets and sapphires.

"Who are you, and where are you going?" asked the serpent.

"I am White Corn, a Moqui brave, and I have been sent by Daw-wa to the land of the Serpent to gain a wife and great wisdom."

"Perhaps it would be better for you to gain wisdom before you gain a wife," said the serpent, with an expression on its face that looked like a smile.

"I am not particular as to that," said White Corn.

"Then follow my advice," resumed the serpent. "Tie your plume-sticks together and place them upon the water. They will be transformed by Daw-wa into a raft. Get aboard the raft and remain thereon till the fourth day. Then something will happen that will please you."

The serpent disappeared, and White Corn tied the plume-sticks together and placed them upon the water. Again they were changed into a raft with a canopy of plumes. He sprang aboard, and began to sail up the stream so swiftly that the stars looked like long, narrow streaks of fire.

On the fourth day he saw a black rock jutting out over the stream. Just as he was about to pass it by, the waters began to roar, and finally tossed the boat on its summit. Again the raft turned into plume-sticks, which White Corn placed in his belt. He was much shaken by the fall, but he was still determined to go straight ahead.

At sunrise on the next day another serpent, larger and more beautiful than the first one, crawled from the rock.

"Who are you, and where are you going?" it said.

"I am searching for the land of the Great Serpent, that I may gain wisdom and — a wife," replied the lad.

"You are already in the land of the Great Serpent," replied the reptile. "I am the Great Serpent, and I will give you the knowledge you crave."

It is recorded that the snake told White Corn all about the heavenly bodies, the winds, the nations of the earth, and all things that in those days made men wise.

"Now you are prepared to commune with the Great Chief," said the serpent, when the lessons were finished.

At that moment the great black rock, upon which the Indian brave was standing, flew apart. White Corn felt himself sinking — down, down, down, into a pit of ebony blackness. Soon he found himself in a great tunnel. He saw a bright light shining in the distance, and slowly plodded along to reach it. Behind him the rocks kept falling, as if to keep him from returning. They made a sound that reminded him of mighty thunder.

When the beautiful ruby light in the distance could be plainly seen, sweet music fell upon his ears. He hastened his tired footsteps, his heart beating with expectation. All about him streams of liquid light bubbled forth from the rocky walls, and crystal fruits sparkled upon the avenue of trees through which he found himself passing.

Presently he saw a host of men and maidens clad in sunbeams and moonbeams, dancing about the throne of an old man with long white hair. Upon his brow rested a coronet, from which a large red ruby sent out a flood of dazzling rays that lighted the great cavern. A bevy of graceful girls, dressed in fleecy clouds sparkling with the beams of stars and the spray of dashing waves, came tripping forth to meet White Corn and conduct him to the Great Chief.

"My children and I have been waiting for thee a long time, White Corn of the Moquis," said the Great Chief. "We are the sons and daughters of Knowledge, and here we are forced to abide until the tribes of the Earth are ready to receive us. Come and make merry with us. What wouldst thou have?"

"O Great Chief — I want a wife to help me enjoy my happiness," said White Corn.

All the maidens began to laugh, while the music grew softer and sweeter, and the waters of the streams and fountains turned to sunset golden.

"Take thy choice," said the Great Chief, kindly.

"Any of them will do — it is thou that must choose for me," faltered White Corn.

The Great Chief reached behind him and seized a cloud that was passing by. When the light of the great ruby fell upon it, it changed into the loveliest Indian maiden that White Corn had ever seen. Her hair was as black as the crow's wing, her cheeks were like the red haw, her smile glowed like the eastern sky at dawn; but more apparent than all other charms were her eyes that shone like beautiful stars.

"She is mine!" cried White Corn rapturously, as he threw out his arms. "She is the maid of my choice, and she shall be called Bright Eyes!"

But meanwhile the land of the Moquis was smitten sore. While all the tribe were wondering what had become of White Corn, a score of Giants stole from the great mountains and began to destroy the property of the wonderful people who had never been conquered.

Now was the time for Lolomi, White Corn's dearest friend, to do brave acts that would win for him a high station and the realization of all his youthful dreams. He was made all the more desirous of being great by the scornful taunting of a beautiful Moqui maiden whose name was Rosy Dawn.

In vain he had pleaded for her hand, but each time she had said:

"When thou hast become great, so that I may be proud of thee, then will I become thy wife; but it is not well that the daughter of the rich and powerful Roaring River should be wed to one whose bravery has never been tested."

Every morning the Giants would come down from the mountains and peep across the vast tableland where the Moquis dwelt. Then they would reach out their big hands and steal horses and cattle, roaring all the time with a volume that shook the mountains. At last they said the time would come when they would run across the mesa and trample all the Moquis as though they were red ants.

The King of the tribe offered in marriage the handsomest maiden in the land, and a thousand horses to the man who would deliver his people from the Giants.

Lolomi's heart beat high with courage, only to sink with despair, when he realized what a toy he was in comparison with the Giants; but he made up his mind that he would die fighting rather than give up Rosy Dawn.

One morning as he was walking about the outskirts of the mesa, he saw a horned toad lying by a rock, struggling as if in pain. The Moquis were kind to toads as well as to snakes, so, even in the midst of his grave unrest, Lolomi stopped to see if he could not relieve the poor creature.

As he bent down to pick it up, he was surprised to hear it say these words in his own language:

"Dost thou wish to destroy the Giants?"

"Yes — above all things else on earth," replied Lolomi, in surprise.

"I am going to die soon," continued the toad, rolling its eyes about and breathing heavily. "When I am dead, put on my crest and breastplate, and pull the scales from my eyes. Thou wilt then be prepared to guard the land of the Moquis and to fight the Giants. Take thy station at this point. When a Giant steps across thy borders, advance slowly toward him, looking him straight in the eye. The man who cannot squarely eye his enemy is a coward. The Giant will walk backward, unable to take his eyes from thee. Keep steadily advancing. When he reaches the edge of the tableland, he will fall off and be killed. If thou keepest close watch, and are brave, Lolomi, every Giant will meet a similar fate."

When the toad was dead, Lolomi took off its crest and placed it upon his head. The crest began to grow larger and thicker. It reached his shoulders, leaving tiny openings through which he could see and breathe. It was so strong that the sharpest weapon could not cut it open. Then he put on the breastplate, which was no bigger than his thumb-nail. It began to grow larger and larger until it covered him all over like a suit of armour. When Lolomi pulled the scales from the eyes of the toad, he felt as light as a feather and as brave as a lion.

No sooner was he prepared for battle than a Giant peered over the tableland, and with a loud shout that roused all the Moquis, he leapt up and began to advance, taking strides a half-mile in length.

When the Giant saw Lolomi, he threw a large spear that struck his foe's breastplate, but glanced harmlessly off. He threw another, which bounded back from Lolomi's breastplate and struck the Giant upon the knee. He gave a howl of pain that shook the earth, and was about to step upon Lolomi; but the courageous youth, remembering what the toad had said, looked steadily at him, advancing slowly.

The Giant walked slowly backward, while Lolomi waved his spear and followed. Step by step he drove his foe to the edge of the tableland. Then there was a great bellow of terror, the falling of stones, and the crackling of timber, as the Giant fell down into a black chasm — never to frighten the Moquis again.

Another Giant appeared to avenge the death of his comrade, but him likewise Lolomi drove backward into the chasm. Another Giant, and still another, and many others appeared, but Lolomi, with steadfast eye and steady nerve, drove them all back into the chasm, where they died in a heap.

The Moquis, headed by the King, came forth to congratulate the brave hero. Some brought costly furs and feathers and beads and all sorts of garments from their wigwams, and laid them at his feet.

They all insisted that one so brave should be made their King, and forthwith he was given the greatest honour that ever fell to a Moqui brave.

At sunset they went to where the dead Giants were heaped together, and covered them with stones. To this day that spot is known as the Giants' Fall.

Lolomi was overjoyed because his beloved people would no longer be annoyed by the terrible Giants. When he returned to his wigwam, around which hundreds of horses and cattle had been staked, he found that he had become rich as well as powerful; for sometimes the reaching of one great aim leads to the attainment of others as well.

But what was his surprise to find Rosy Dawn waiting inside the wigwam, cooking fish with her own dimpled hands, and looking as cheerful and obedient as any little squaw that ever won the heart of a brave warrior.

It is said that White Corn, by the wise use of his plume-sticks and the sack of magic meal, escaped from the dark cavern under the earth, and, with Bright Eyes, returned to the fair land of the Moquis, where they were welcomed by King Lolomi and his wife, Rosy Dawn.

To this day there are tribes of Indians that prefer white corn to that of any other colour; while Lolomi is used by them as a word of welcome greeting.

Manštin, the Rabbit[*]

MANŠTIN was an adventurous brave, but very kind-hearted. Stamping a moccasined foot as he drew on his buckskin leggins, he said: "Grandmother, beware of Iktomi! Do not let him lure you into some cunning trap. I am going to the North country on a long hunt."

With these words of caution to the bent old rabbit grandmother with whom he had lived since he was a tiny babe, Manštin started off toward the north. He was scarce over the great high hills when he heard the shrieking of a human child.

"Wän!" he ejaculated, pointing his long ears toward the direction of the sound; "Wän! that is the work of cruel Double-face. Shameless coward! he delights in torturing helpless creatures!"

Muttering indistinct words, Manštin ran up the last hill and lo! in the ravine beyond stood the terrible monster with a face in front and one in the back of his head!

This brown giant was without clothes save for a wildcat-skin about his loins. With a wicked, gleaming eye, he watched the little black-haired baby he held in his strong arm. In a laughing voice he hummed an Indian mother's lullaby, "Ä-bo͞o! Äbo͞o!" and at the same time he switched the naked baby with a thorny wild-rose bush.

Quickly Manštin jumped behind a large sage-bush on the brow of the hill. He bent his bow and the sinewy string twanged. Now an arrow stuck above the ear of Double-face. It was a poisoned arrow, and the giant fell dead. Then Manštin took the little brown baby and hurried away from the ravine. Soon he came to a teepee whence loud, wailing voices broke. It was the teepee of the stolen baby and the mourners were its heartbroken parents.

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[*] "From Old Indian Legends." Copyright, 1904, by Ginn & Company.

When gallant Manštin returned the child to the eager arms of the mother there came a sudden terror into the eyes of both the Dakotas. They feared lest it was Double-face come in a new guise to torture them. The rabbit understood their fear and said: "I am Manštin, the kind-hearted — Manštin, the noted huntsman. I am your friend. Do not fear."

That night a strange thing happened. While the father and mother slept, Manštin took the wee baby. With his feet placed gently yet firmly upon the tiny toes of the little child, he drew upward by each small hand the sleeping child till he was a full-grown man. With a forefinger he traced a slit in the upper lip; and when on the morrow the man and woman awoke they could not distinguish their own son from Manštin, so much alike were the braves.

"Henceforth we are friends, to help each other," said Manštin, shaking a right hand in farewell. "The earth is our common ear, to carry from its uttermost extremes one's slightest wish for the other!"

"Ho! Be it so!" answered the newly made man.

Upon leaving his friend, Manštin hurried away toward the North country, whither he was bound for a long hunt. Suddenly he came upon the edge of a wide brook. His alert eye caught sight of a rawhide rope staked to the water's brink, which led away toward a small, round hut in the distance. The ground was trodden into a deep groove beneath the loosely drawn rawhide rope.

"Hun-hĕ*!*" exclaimed Manštin, bending over the freshly made footprints in the moist bank of the brook. "A man's footprints!" he said to himself. "A blind man lives in yonder hut! This rope is his guide by which he comes for his daily water!" surmised Manštin who knew all the peculiar contrivances of the people. At once his eyes became fixed upon the solitary dwelling and hither he followed his curiosity — a real blind man's rope.

Quietly he lifted the door-flap and entered in. An old, tooth-less grandfather, blind and shaky with age, sat upon the ground. He was not deaf, however. He had heard the entrance and felt the presence of some stranger.

"How, grandchild," he mumbled, for he was old enough to be grandparent to every living thing; "how! I cannot see you. Pray, speak your name!"

"Grandfather, I am Manštin," answered the rabbit, all the while looking with curious eyes about the wigwam. "Grandfather, what is it so tightly packed in all these buckskin bags placed against the tent poles?" he asked.

"My grandchild, those are dried buffalo meat and venison. These are magic bags which never grow empty. I am blind and cannot go on a hunt. Hence a kind Maker has given me these magic bags of choicest foods."

Then the old, bent man pulled at a rope which lay by his right hand. "This leads me to the brook where I drink! and this," said he, turning to the one on his left, "and this takes me into the forest, where I feel about for dry sticks for my fire."

"Grandfather, I wish I lived in such a sure luxury! I would lean back against a tent pole, and with crossed feet I would smoke sweet willow bark the rest of my days," sighed Manštin.

"My grandchild, your eyes are your luxury! you would be unhappy without them!" the old man replied.

"Grandfather, I would give you my two eyes for your place!" cried Manštin.

"How! you have said it. Arise. Take out your eyes and give them to me. Henceforth you are at home here in my stead."

At once Manštin took out both his eyes and the old man put them on! Rejoicing, the old grandfather started away with his young eyes while the blind rabbit filled his dream pipe, leaning lazily against the tent pole. For a short time it was a most pleasant pastime to smoke willow bark and to eat from the magic bags.

Manštin grew thirsty, but there was no water in the small dwelling. Taking one of the rawhide ropes he started toward the brook to quench his thirst. He was young and unwilling to trudge slowly in the old man's footpath. He was full of glee, for it had been many long moons since he had tasted such good food. Thus he skipped confidently along, jerking the old weather-eaten rawhide spasmodically till all of a sudden it gave way and Manštin fell headlong into the water.

"Ĕn! Ĕn!" he grunted, kicking frantically amid-stream. All along the slippery bank he vainly tried to climb, till at last he chanced upon the old stake and the deeply worn footpath. Exhausted and inwardly disgusted with his mishaps, he crawled more cautiously on all fours to his wigwam door. Dripping with his recent plunge, he sat with chattering teeth within his unfired wigwam.

The sun had set and the night air was chilly, but there was no fire-wood in the dwelling. "Hin!" murmured Manštin, and bravely tried the other rope. "I go for some fire-wood!" he said, following the rawhide rope which led into the forest. Soon he stumbled upon thickly strewn dry willow sticks. Eagerly, with both hands, he gathered the wood into his outspread blanket. Manštin was naturally an energetic fellow.

When he had a large heap, he tied two opposite ends of blanket together and lifted the bundle of wood upon his back, but alas! he had unconsciously dropped the end of the rope and now he was lost in the wood!

"Hin! hin!" he groaned. Then pausing a moment, he set his fan-like ears to catch any sound of approaching footsteps. There was none. Not even a night bird twittered to help him out of his predicament.

With a bold face, he made a start at random.

He fell into some tangled wood where he was held fast. Manštin let go his bundle and began to lament having given away his two eyes.

"Friend, my friend, I have need of you! The old oak grandfather has gone off with my eyes, and I am lost in the woods!" he cried with his lips close to the earth.

Scarcely had he spoken when the sound of voices was audible on the outer edge of the forest. Nearer and louder grew the voices — one was the clear flute tones of a young brave and the other the tremulous squeaks of an old grandfather.

It was Manštin's friend with the Earth Ear and the old grandfather. "Here, Manštin, take back your eyes," said the old man; "I knew you would not be content in my stead, but I wanted you to learn your lesson. I have had pleasure seeing with your eyes and trying your bow and arrows, but since I am old and feeble I much prefer my own teepee and my magic bags!"

Thus talking, the three returned to the hut. The old grandfather crept into his wigwam, which is often mistaken for a mere oak tree by little Indian girls and boys.

Manštin, with his own bright eyes fitted into his head again, went on happily to hunt in the North country.

*The Ants That Pushed on the Sky**

ONCE upon a time there lived in one of the Pueblos a young Indian named Kahp-too-óo-yoo, the Corn-stalk Young Man. He was not only a famous hunter and a brave warrior against the raiding Comanches, but a great wizard; and to him the Trues had given the power of the clouds. When Kahp-too-óo-yoo willed it, the glad rains fell, and made the dry fields laugh in green; and without him no one could bring water from the sky. His father was Old-Black-Cane, his mother was Corn-Woman, and his two sisters were Yellow-Corn-Maiden and Blue-Corn-Maiden.

Kahp-too-óo-yoo had a friend, a young man of about the same age. But, as is often true, the friend was of a false heart, and was really a wizard, though Kahp-too-óo-yoo never dreamed of such a thing.

The two younger men used to go together to the mountains to get wood, and always carried their bows and arrows, to kill deer and antelopes, or whatever game they might find.

One day the false friend came to Kahp-too-óo-yoo, and said:

"Friend, let us go to-morrow for wood, and to hunt."

They agreed that so they would do. Next day they started before sunrise, and came presently to the spot where they gathered wood. Just there they started a herd of deer. Kahp-too-óo-yoo followed part of the herd, which fled to the northwest, and the friend pursued those that went southwest. After a long, hard chase, Kahp-too-óo-yoo killed a deer with his swift arrows, and brought it on his strong back to the place where they had separated. Presently came the friend, very hot and tired, and with empty hands: and seeing the deer, he was pinched with jealousy.

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*From "The Man Who Married the Moon," by Charles F. Lummis. Copyright, 1892, by The Century Company.

"Come, friend," said Kahp-too-óo-yoo. "It is well for brothers to share with brothers. Take of this deer and cook and eat; and carry a part to your house, as if you had killed it yourself."

"Thank you," answered the other coldly, as one who will not; but he did not accept.

When they had gathered each a load of wood and lashed it with rawhide thongs in bundles upon their shoulders, they trudged home — Kahp-too-óo-yoo carrying the deer on top of his wood. His sisters received him with joy, praising him as a hunter; and the friend went away to his house with a heavy face.

Several different days when they went to the mountain together, the very same thing came to pass. Kahp-too-óo-yoo killed each time a deer; and each time the friend came home with nothing, refusing all offers to share as brothers. And he grew more jealous and more sullen every day.

At last he came again to invite Kahp-too-óo-yoo to go; but this time it was with an evil purpose that he asked. Then again the same things happened. Again the unsuccessful friend refused to take a share of Kahp-too-óo-yoo's deer; and when he had sat long without a word, he said:

"Friend Kahp-too-óo-yoo, now I will prove you if you are truly my friend, for I do not think it."

"Surely," said Kahp-too-óo-yoo, "if there is any way to prove myself, I will do it gladly, for truly I am your friend."

"Then come, and we will play a game together, and with that I will prove you."

"It is well! But what game shall we play, for here we have nothing?"

Near them stood a broken pine tree, with one great arm raised from its twisted body. And looking at it, the false friend said:

"I see nothing but to play the *gallo* race; and because we have no horses we will ride this arm of the pine tree — first I will ride, and then you."

So he climbed the pine tree, and sat astride the limb as upon a horse, and rode, reaching over to the ground as if to pick up the chicken.

"Now, you," he said, coming down; and Kahp-too-óo-yoo climbed the tree and rode on the swinging branch. But the false friend bewitched the pine, and suddenly it grew in a moment to the very sky, carrying Kahp-too-óo-yoo.

"We do this to one another," taunted the false friend, as the tree shot up; and taking the deer which Kahp-too-óo-yoo had killed, he went to the village. There the sisters met him, and asked:

"Where is our brother?"

"Truly I know not, for he went northwest and I southwest; and though I waited long at the meeting-place, he did not come. Probably he will soon return. But take of this deer which I killed, for sisters should share the labours of brothers."

But the girls would take no meat, and went home sorrowful.

Time went on, and still there was no Kahp-too-óo-yoo. His sisters and his old parents wept always, and all the village was sad. And soon the crops grew yellow in the fields, and the springs failed, and the animals walked like weary shadows; for Kahp-too-óo-yoo, he who had the power of the clouds, was gone, and there was no rain. And then perished all that is green; the animals fell in the brown fields, and the gaunt people who sat to warm themselves in the sun began to die there where they sat. At last the poor old man said to his daughters:

"Little daughters, prepare food, for again we will go to look for your brother."

The girls made cakes of the blue corn-meal for the journey; and on the fourth day they started. Old Black-Cane hobbled to the south, his wife to the east, the elder girl to the north, and the younger to the west.

For a great distance they travelled; and at last Blue-Corn Maiden, who was in the north, heard a far, faint song. It was so little that she thought it must be imaginary; but she stopped to listen, and softly, softly it came again:

Tó-ai-jóo-ni-hlóo-hlim,
Eng-k'hai k'háhm;
Eé-eh-bóori-kóon-hlee-oh,
Ing-k'hai k'háhm.
Ah-ee-ái, ah-hee-ái,
Aim!

(Old-Black-Cane
My father is called;
Corn-Woman
My mother is called.
Ah-ee-ái, ah-hee-ái,
Aim!)

When she heard this, Blue-Corn-Maiden ran until she came to her sister, and cried:

"Sister! Sister! I think I hear our brother somewhere in captivity. Listen!"

Trembling, they listened; and again the song came floating to them, so soft, so sad that they wept — as to this day their people weep when a white-haired old man, filled with the memories of Kahp-too-óo-yoo, sings that plaintive melody.

"Surely it is our brother!" they cried; and off they went running to find their parents. And when all listened together, again they heard the song.

"Oh, my son!" cried the poor old woman, "in what captivity do you find yourself? True it is that your father is Old-Black-Cane, and I, your mother, am called Corn-Woman. But why do you sing thus?"

Then all four of them began to follow the song, and at last they came to the foot of the sky-reaching pine; but they could see nothing of Kahp-too-óo-yoo, nor could their cries reach him. There, on the ground, were his bow and arrows, with strings and feathers eaten away by time; and there was his pack of wood, tied with the rawhide thong, ready to be taken home. But after they had searched everywhere, they could not find Kahp-too-óo-yoo; and finally they went home, heavy at heart.

At last it happened that P'ah-whá-yoo-óo-deh, the Little Black Ant, took a journey and went up the bewitched pine, even to its top in the sky. When he found Kahp-too-óo-yoo there a prisoner, the Little Black Ant was astonished, and said:

"Great *Kah-bay-deh* [Man of Power], how comes it that you are up here in such a condition, while your people at home are suffering and dying for rain, and few are left to meet you if you return? Are you here of your free will?"

"No," groaned Kahp-too-óo-yoo; "I am here because of the jealousy of him who was as my brother, with whom I shared my food and labour, whose home was my home, and my home his. He is the cause, for he was jealous and bewitched me hither. And now I am dying of famine."

"If that is so," said the Little Black Ant, "I will be the one to help you"; and he ran down to the world as fast as he could. When he got there he sent out the crier to summon all his nation, and also that of the *In-toon*, the Big Red Ants. Soon all the armies of the Little Black Ants and the Big Red Ants met at the foot of the pine, and held a council. They smoked the *weer* and deliberated what should be done.

"You Big Red Ants are stronger than we who are small," said the War-Captain of the Little Black Ants, "and for that you ought to take the top of the tree to work."

"*Een-dah!*" (No) said the War-Captain of the Big Red Ants. "If you think we are stronger, give us the bottom, where we can work more, and you go to the top."

So it was agreed, and the captains made their armies ready. But first the Little Black Ants got the cup of an acorn, and mixed in it corn-meal and water and honey, and carried it up the tree. They were so many that they covered its trunk all the way to the sky.

When Kahp-too-óo-yoo saw, his heart was heavy, and he thought: "But what good will that very little do me, for I am dying of hunger and thirst?" "Nay, friend," answered the Captain of the Little Black Ants, who knew his thought. "A person should not think so. This little is enough, and there will be some left."

And it was so; for when Kahp-too-óo-yoo had eaten all he could, the acorn-cup was still nearly full. Then the ants carried the cup to the ground and came back to him.

"Now, friend," said the Captain, "we will do our best. But now you must shut your eyes till I say '*Ahw!*'"

Kahp-too-óo-yoo shut his eyes, and the Captain sent signals down to those at the foot of the tree. And the Little Black Ants above put their feet against the sky and pushed with all their might on the top of the pine; and the Big Red Ants below caught the trunk and pulled as hard as they could; and the very first tug drove the great pine a quarter of its length into the earth.

"*Ahw!*" shouted the Captain of the Little Black Ants, and Kahp-too-óo-yoo opened his eyes; but he could see nothing below.

"Shut your eyes again," said the Captain, giving the signal. Again the Little Black Ants pushed mightily against the sky, and the Big Red Ants pulled mightily from below; and the pine was driven another fourth of its length into the earth.

"*Ahw!*" cried the Captain; and when Kahp-too-óo-yoo opened his eyes he could just see the big, brown world.

Again he closed his eyes. There was another great push and pull, and only a quarter of the pine was left above the ground. Now Kahp-too-óo-yoo could see, far below, the parched fields strewn with dead animals, and his own village full of dying people.

Again the Little Black Ants pushed and the Big Red Ants pulled, and this time the tree was driven clear out of sight, and Kahp-too-óo-yoo was left sitting on the ground. He hastily made a bow and arrows and soon killed a fat deer, which he brought and divided among the Little Black Ants and the Big Red Ants, thanking them for their kindness.

Then he made all his clothing to be new, for he had been four years a prisoner in the bewitched tree, and was all in rags.

Making for himself a flute from the bark of a young tree, he played upon it as he strode homeward and sang:

Kahp-too-óo-yoo tú-mah-quee,
Nah-chóor kwé-shay-tin,
Nah-shúr kwé-shay-tin;
Kahp-too-óo-yoo tú-mah-quee!

(Kahp-too-óo-yoo has come to life again,
Is back to his home coming,
Blowing the yellow and the blue;
Kahp-too-óo-yoo has come to life again!)]

As he walked and sang, the forgotten clouds came over him, and the soft rain began to fall, and all was green and good. But only so far as his voice reached came the rain; and beyond all was still death and drought. When he came to the end of the wet, he played and sang again; and again the rain fell as far as his voice was heard. This time the Fool-Boy, who was wandering outside the dying village, saw the far storm and heard the singing. He ran to tell Kahp-too-óo-yoo's parents; but nobody would believe a Foolish, and they sent him away.

When the Fool-Boy went out again the rain fell on him and gave him strength, and he came running a second time to tell. Then the sisters came out of the house and saw the rain and heard the song; and they cried for joy, and told their parents to rise and meet him. But the poor old people were dying of weakness, and could not rise; and the sisters went alone. When they met him they fell on their knees, weeping; but Kahp-too-óo-yoo lifted them up and blessed them, gave an ear of blue corn to Blue-Corn-Maiden, and to Yellow-Corn-Maiden an ear of yellow corn, and brought them home.

As he sang again, the rain fell in the village; and when it touched the pinched faces of the dead they sat up and opened their mouths to catch it. And the dying crawled out to drink, and were strong again; and the withered fields grew green and glad.

When they came to the house, Kahp-too-óo-yoo blessed his parents, and then said:

"Little sisters, give us to eat."

But they answered, "How? For you have been gone these four years, and there was none to give us rain. We planted, but nothing came, and to-day we ate the last grain."

"Nay, little sisters," he said. "A person should not think so. Look now in the store-rooms, if there be not something there."

"But we have looked, and looked, and turned over everything to try to find one grain."

"Yet look once more," he said; and when they opened the door, lo! there was the store-room piled to the roof with corn and another room was full of wheat. Then they cried for joy, and began to roast the blue ears, for they were dying of hunger.

At the sweet smell of the roasting corn came the starving neighbours, crowding at the door, and crying:

"O Kahp-too-óo-yoo! Give us to taste one grain of corn, and then we will go home and die."

But Kahp-too-óo-yoo handed to each an ear, and said:

"Fathers, brothers, go now to your own houses, for there you will find corn as much as here." And when they went, it was so. All began to roast corn and to eat; and the dead in the houses awoke and were strong again, and all the village sang and danced.

From that time there was plenty of rain, for he who had the power of the clouds was at home again. In the spring the people planted, and in the fall the crops were so great that all the town could not hold them; so that which was left they brought to Shee-eh-whib-bak (Isleta), where we enjoy it to this day.

As for his false friend, he died of shame in his house, not daring to come out; and no one wept for him.

Longnose the Dwarf

MANY, many years ago, in a well-known town of Germany, there lived a cobbler and his good wife. They were honest, industrious folk, working hard to gain their daily bread and to keep free from disgrace and debt. In the daytime the poor cobbler sat at a corner of the street mending old boots and shoes, ay, and making new ones, too, provided he could get anyone to trust him with the job. In such case, however, he had to buy the necessary leather first, as he kept no materials by him — he was too poor for that. His wife used to sell fruit and vegetables, the produce of their little garden, and many people were glad to buy of her, for she always seemed so clean and neat, and knew so well how to make her fruit-stall attractive, and to display everything upon it in a thoroughly inviting manner.

These good people had one son, a tall, handsome boy of eight years old, stout and well built for his age, with a pleasant, merry face. He generally stayed with his mother at the fruit-market, and carried the purchases of customers back to their homes for them, rarely returning without either a beautiful flower of some kind, a piece of cake, or even of money; for the owners of the houses to which he went, whose servants had been to market, were always pleased to see the little fellow, and they constantly made him some nice present.

One day the cobbler's wife was at the market as usual; before her stood baskets of cabbages, cauliflowers, and other vegetables, beside lettuces, endive, and all sorts of salads. On the stall, too, were luscious little pears, the first of the season, together with golden-coloured apricots, and crimson-cheeked apples. Jamie, her little boy, sat next to her, inviting folk in his clear, shrill voice to come and buy:

"This way, gentlemen," he cried, "this way; come and look how fine our cabbages are, how fresh and crisp our lettuces! Here, ladies, if you are in want of any nice apricots, or any newly picked apples and pears! who 'll buy, I say? My mother sells as cheap as anyone; who 'll buy? who 'll buy?"

Thus he kept calling out for some time. After a while, an old woman passed by through the row of stalls; she seemed all in rags and tatters, with a little wizened, pinched-up face that age had quite covered with wrinkles. She had red eyes and a sharp, hooked nose that well-nigh reached to her chin. Though she used a long stick to walk with, apparently it did not help her much; for she limped and reeled and waddled in her gait, as though she were moved by some crazy machinery that was out of order and might at any moment upset her, nose foremost, upon the pavement.

The cobbler's wife watched this old woman attentively. Never during the whole sixteen years that she had daily come to market had she noticed such an extraordinary looking person. And she became half terrified when the hag hobbled toward her, and stopped short in front of her stall.

"Are you Hannah, the fruit-seller — eh?" asked the beldame, in a harsh, querulous voice, as her head kept nodding and shaking to and fro.

"Yes, that is my name," replied the cobbler's wife. "Is there anything I can oblige you with?"

"I 'll just see, I 'll just see; perhaps you may have some of the herbs that I want," said the old woman, as she bent down over the basket and thrust her brown, skinny hands into it, while with spider-like fingers she pulled all the nice fresh herbs about, rubbing the leaves of some and holding them close up to her nose to smell.

The fruit-woman's heart was well-nigh in her mouth as she saw her rare herbs being spoiled like this. However, she ventured no remonstrance — it was a buyer's privilege to test the worth of her wares, and, moreover, the old dame inspired her with an unaccountable horror. Having mauled about the entire contents of the basket, the hag only muttered, "Bad stuff — bad herbs — rubbish, every bit of it — there's nothing there that I want — much better things fifty years ago — rubbishing stuff, every bit of it!"

Little Jamie fired up at this.

"Look here, you impudent old woman," he cried, indignantly, "first you come and stick your nasty brown fingers into our newly gathered herbs, and squeeze them all up; then you hold them under your long nose until nobody who has watched you will care to buy them afterward; and now you abuse them into the bargain, and call our things rubbishing stuff, though the Grand Duke's cook himself always comes to us for everything that he wants!"

The old woman leered odiously at the plucky little fellow as, with a hideous laugh, she croaked:

"Aha! my son, so you like my nose, my nice long nose, do you? Well, you shall have one, too, right in the middle of your face, one that will reach far beyond your chin, too!"

And as she spoke, she stumbled against another basket containing cabbages and cauliflowers. From this she took out the bonniest, whitest-looking heads of cabbage, squeezed them up in her hands until they squeaked again, and then flung them back anyhow into the basket, saying, "Bad things, bad cabbages, every one of them!"

"Don't shake your head about in that way!" said Jamie, half afraid; "your neck's so thin that it might easily snap in two; and then, supposing your head fell into the basket, who would buy any cabbages of us then, I should like to know?"

"So you do not admire long necks, eh?" muttered the dame, with a grin. "You shall not have one at all; your head shall stick close to your shoulders, so as to keep it from rolling off your little body."

"Have done with talking nonsense to the boy," said Jamie's mother, at last, angered beyond patience at all the fingering that her goods had undergone; "if you want to buy anything, do so at once. Look, you 're driving all my customers away!"

"Good, I *will* buy something," answered the other, glaring viciously, "and it shall be these six cabbage-heads. But I have to lean upon my stick, as you see, and can therefore carry nothing. You must let your little boy bring the vegetables home for me; I 'll pay him well for doing it."

Jamie had no mind to go along with the hag; he cried bitterly, for her ugliness frightened him; but he had to obey his mother, who thought it wrong to let a weakly old woman carry such a load. So he did as he was bid; and, wrapping the cabbages in a cloth, he followed the dame across the market-place. She was not a very quick walker, and it took nearly three-quarters of an hour before they at last reached an out-of-the-way part of the town, where the beldame stopped in front of a queer, broken-down kind of house. Taking an old rusty key from her pocket, she adroitly thrust it into a tiny hole in the door, which at once flew open; and, to Jamie's astonishment, what did he see on entering?

The interior of the house was splendidly adorned, the ceilings and walls of marble, the furniture of ebony inlaid with gold and jewels, while the floors were of glass, and so smooth and polished that Jamie slipped and nearly fell once or twice. Then the old woman took out a silver whistle, and whistled with it until the place echoed with the sound, when down the staircase ran five or six little guinea-pigs. It seemed strange to Jamie to see them trotting about on two legs, with their paws encased in a couple of nut-shells by way of shoes, while they wore neat little suits of clothes and tiny hats of the very latest fashion.

"Where have you put my shoes, you little wretches?" screamed the old woman, as she struck at them with her stick, until they leaped away whining. "How much longer am I to wait for them?"

Then up the stairs they skipped, returning with two cocoanut shells, lined with leather; these the old woman quickly fitted on to her feet.

And now there was no more limping or hobbling. Flinging aside her stick, she glided rapidly across the glass flooring, pulling Jamie along with her. She stopped at last in one of the rooms that was set about with plates and dishes and other utensils that half made it look like a kitchen, although the tables were of mahogany, and the sofas, with their rich and costly hangings, seemed rather to belong to some place of greater splendour.

"Sit down, child," said the old woman, in a kindly voice, as she pushed him into a corner of the sofa, and set a table in front of him, so that it prevented his getting up. "Sit down, for you 've had a heavy load to carry; and I must give you something now, for being so good. Only wait a few minutes, and I 'll make you some splendid soup — soup that you 'll remember all your life through."

So saying, she blew her whistle a second time. Then in came running a number of guinea-pigs dressed in men's clothes, with white aprons such as cooks wear, and carrying in their girdles ladles for stirring and tasting gravies, and knives with which to chop and cut up meat. These were followed by a troop of squirrels that hopped blithely along, wearing each of them a Turkish dress, and little caps of green velvet upon their heads. They seemed to be the scullions, for they climbed deftly up the walls and brought down from the dresser the necessary pots and pans, besides eggs, butter, flour and herbs, all of which they carried to the fireplace for use. And now the old woman hurried about hither and thither in her cocoanut slippers and it was plain to the lad that she was anxious to cook something unusually nice. The fire began to blaze and crackle; there was a hissing and sputtering in the saucepan, and a delicious, savoury smell spread through the room. Still the grandame bustled about, while the guinea-pigs bustled about, too; and whenever she passed by the fireplace, where the pot was boiling, she always peered into it with her long nose. At last it began to bubble and spurt in earnest; steam rose up from it in clouds, and creamy froth ran over its side into the fire. She then took it off the coals, and, pouring some of the soup into a silver bowl, she put it before little Jamie, and bade him taste its excellence.

"There, my son," quoth she, "just you eat that, and you 'll have all that you like so much in me. You shall be a clever cook as well; but the herb, the herb, *that* you never shall find, *never!* Why had not your mother got it among the others for sale in her baskets?"

The lad got no clear meaning from all this that she muttered; he paid most attention to the soup, which certainly was surprisingly good. Though his mother had made many and many a tasty plateful of broth for him, she had never cooked anything so delicious as this. It was very rich and very strong in flavour, half sweet, half sour, as it were, with a delicate aroma of scented herbs and roots.

He was just finishing the last spoonful when the guinea-pigs suddenly began to burn some Arabian incense, which filled the room with blue clouds that grew denser and more dense as they rose up and floated dreamily through the air. The fumes of the incense worked upon Jamie's senses, in spite of his continually saying to himself, "I must go back, I must go back to mother!" Though he tried ever so hard to keep awake, it was quite useless; he repeatedly sank back, feeling each time more and more drowsy, until at last he fell fast asleep upon the sofa.

Strange dreams came to him. It was if the old woman were stripping him of his clothes and dressing him up in the skin of a squirrel. He could now jump and climb just like one of them; and he went about with the rest of the guinea-pigs and squirrels, and very well-mannered little folk they were. These he joined in waiting on their mistress, the witch.

At the first he was only called upon to clean her shoes; that was to rub oil into the cocoanut shells that she wore, and to scrub and polish them until they shone again. As he had often done such work before at home, he was both clever and quick at the business; and when a year was gone, he was employed in a less menial way. With other squirrels he now had to catch the tiny specks of dust that flickered in the sunlight, which, when they had got enough, they sifted through a very fine hair sieve. The old dame considered these dust specks to be the smallest things possible; and, as she could not chew things very well, not having a tooth in left her head, she ordered her bread to be made of these tiny little atoms. Another year passed. He was now appointed to the office of water-gatherer and, with other servants, had to find fresh water for the old woman to drink. She did not, as might be thought, cause a cistern to be made, nor did she even set a trough in the garden to catch the rain drops; oh, no, she was far too fastidious for anything like that. The squirrels, and Jamie with them, had to collect the dew-drops from the roses in nut-shells; this was the only kind of water that she deigned to have at her table. She usually drank a great deal, so the poor little water-gatherers were always hard at work. With the close of that year Jamie was employed within the house; it was now his business to polish the floors and to keep them bright. As they were of glass, on which the faintest breath became instantly visible, this was hardly a light task for him. After long brushing and scrubbing, the squirrels used to tie old bits of linen to their hind-feet, and skim hither and thither across the floor in a truly dexterous manner.

When four years were over, he was at last transferred to the kitchen. Here he filled a place of honour, one that could only be reached by servants of tried merit. Commencing as a scullion, he rose to become *chef* of the pie and pasty department; and his extraordinary skill and knowledge of everything connected with the kitchen was a cause of wonder even to himself. The most intricate of dishes, patties needing as ingredients two hundred kinds of essences, herb-soups made from every sort of herb under the sun — all these things he mastered, all these things he could prepare quickly and with success.

Thus seven years had gone by while he was in the old woman's service. One day, having put off her cocoanut slippers, and taken her basket and crutch, in order to go out, she gave him orders to pluck a nice young chicken, to roast it with a stuffing of herbs until it was a light brown, and to keep it ready against her return. This he accordingly did, following as best he might the most approved rules of his art. When it was time to make the stuffing, he set about collecting a variety of herbs for that purpose. In the herb-room he noticed what hitherto had escaped his eye; namely, a little cupboard in the wall, the door of which stood ajar. Curiosity prompted him to look closer at what was inside, and there he saw a row of baskets which gave forth a strong aromatic odour. On opening one of the baskets, he found that it contained herbs, strange of their kind, and curious in colour. The leaves and stalk were a bluish-green, while the blossom was small and fiery red in hue, with yellow streaks on the petals. He looked long at this flower; it had the same strange scent as that soup which the old dame had once made for him, long, long ago. He smelt the plant again. So strong was its perfume that he began to sneeze, and continued to do this with increasing violence, until with a start and an even louder sneeze he awoke!

There he lay upon the sofa, rubbing his eyes, and looking about him.

"Well, how lifelike things all are in dreams, to be sure!" said he to himself. "I could almost have sworn that I was actually a squirrel, the companion and equal of guinea-pigs and such-like vermin; ay, and that I grew to be a great and distinguished cook as well! How mother will laugh when I tell her all about it! But maybe she 'll scold me too, for falling asleep in a strange house, instead of helping her at the market!"

With these thoughts in his mind he jumped up, intending to hurry homeward, but slumber seemed to have stiffened all his limbs. In his neck he felt specially uncomfortable, for his head would not move easily to and fro. He laughed to himself at being so incapable of rousing himself properly, for every now and then he accidentally bumped his nose against a cupboard or the wall, and on turning sharp round in a doorway it kept hitting one or the other of sides. The squirrels and guinea-pigs ran round about, whining piteously, as though they would have gone with him, too; and when he reached the threshold of the house, he asked them to come along where he was going, for they were really such dear, pretty little creatures. But away they scurried back to their work again, their nut-shell boots pattering over the polished glass floor;

and soon he only heard a faint whining and bleating behind him in the distance.

The part of the town through which the old witch had led him was somewhat far away, and he nearly lost himself in the narrow, crowded streets. Very full of people they seemed to him; probably, he thought, folk wanted to have a look at some dwarf who was hard by, for everywhere he heard the cry, "Oho! look, look there! look at the hideous dwarf! Where can he have sprung from? Yah! look at his long nose; and how his head is buried in his shoulders; see, too, what nasty brown hands he 's got!"

At any other time he would have run with the rest, for he could never resist the sight of a giant or of a dwarf, or of any people in outlandish costumes. But to-day he had to make haste; he had to get back to his mother.

On reaching the market his courage seemed to fail him; he actually felt quite frightened. There sat his mother in the same place, and there was still a good quantity of fruit on the stall, so he could not have been asleep for very long. Yet, even in the distance, it seemed to him as though she were very sorrowful about something or other, for she called to no passer-by, but leant her head wearily upon her hand. He hesitated a moment as to what he should do; then, plucking up heart, he crept behind her, and putting his hand affectionately upon her shoulder; said gently, "What is it, mother dear? are you angry at my stopping away?"

Turning quickly round, she started backward with a shriek of terror.

"What do you want, you ugly dwarf?" cried she. "Be off directly! None of your stupid jokes with me; I can't bear them."

"But, mother, what 's the matter? You must be ill or something; why do you drive away your own son from you like this?"

"Get you gone, I tell you!" retorted the fruit-woman, angrily; "not a penny shall you earn from me by your mountebank tricks, hideous little fright that you are!"

"Mother, mother, have you lost your wits? Don't you know me, then? Don't you see I 'm your little son, Jamie?"

"Nay, now, but this is too much," screamed his mother to her neighbour at the next stall; "this ugly dwarf here comes up, and his presence alone keeps all my customers away; and now he even dares to joke with me about my misfortune—says he to me, 'I 'm your little son, Jamie,' the impudent wretch!"

Then the other market-women one and all began to rate him soundly; this, as you know, they understand how to do to perfection. They abused him for mocking and jeering at a poor woman's misfortune in having lost her handsome little son seven years ago; they even threatened to fall upon him tooth and nail if he did not instantly take himself off.

To Jamie all this was bitterly perplexing. What could they mean by "seven years"? And why did they dub him a hideous dwarf? What had happened to him? When he saw that his mother would have nothing to do with him, the tears started to his eyes; he wandered sadly along the street until he came to the little shop where his father sat during the day-time, mending shoes.

"I 'll see," said he to himself, "if he, too, wishes to disown me; I 'll stand by the door and talk to him."

So he stopped outside the door of the shop and looked in. The cobbler was too busy to notice him at first, but, on glancing up suddenly, down fell all his tools, his leather, and the boot that he was mending, as with a start he cried out:

"Goodness gracious! what 's that? what 's that?"

"Good evening to you, master," said Jamie as he entered; "how are you getting on?"

"Badly enough, badly enough, little sir," answered his father, to the boy's great astonishment. He had not recognized him, it was clear. "My business is n't managed as it ought to be managed, you see, for I 'm quite alone here; and though I 'm getting old, I can't afford to keep an apprentice." And he sighed as he spoke.

"But you have no son to help you in your work?"

"Ah, I *had* one, years ago — his name was Jamie; and by this time, if alive, he must be a fine young fellow who would have been a firm prop to me just now. Such a clever boy as he was, too! Why, by the time he was eight he knew a good deal about the trade; ay, and was so smart and handy besides! He would have brought me customers enough, I know, so that I should soon have given up my cobbling and would only have undertaken orders for new boots! Heigho! 't is the way of the world, alas!" And he sighed.

"Where is your son, then? What has become of him?" asked Jamie with faltering voice.

"Heaven only knows," answered the other; "it 's seven long years ago now since he was kidnapped from us one market-day!"

"*Seven years ago!*" echoed the boy, mechanically.

"Ay, my little man, seven years ago — it seems like but yesterday since my wife came home to me, crying and sobbing to tell me that the child had not come back from an errand the whole day; and that she had searched high and low for him, but could not find him. I always thought and always said that this would happen sooner or later; Jamie, you know, was as pretty a child as ever you saw, and my wife was proud of him, liked customers to notice him, and would often send him on errands with vegetables to different grand houses. That was all very well; he got presents given to him in abundance; but I always used to say, 'Mind what you 're about with Jamie! Look to the lad, for the town 's a big one, and there are many bad characters about!' And I was not far wrong. Into the market comes an ugly old hag one day, who, after overhauling all the things at our stall, buys such a lot of cabbage-heads that she can't take them away herself. My wife out of pity lets Jamie be porter and carry the load; he goes off with the old woman, and — from that hour to this we have never set eyes on him again."

"And that 's seven years ago, you say?"

"Well, 't will be seven years come April. We had the boy cried for by the town-crier; we went from house to house and asked about him; many knew him, and liked him well, and they willingly helped us in our search. But it was all in vain. Nobody could say who the old woman was, or where she came from; till at last an aged fish-wife, who must have seen ninety summers at the least, said that it may have been the wicked fairy Herbsucker, who visits the town every fifty years to buy vairous things for herself."

And the cobbler took up the boot that he was mending and went on with his work. Slowly and gradually it dawned upon Jamie that he had not been asleep after all, but had actually been seven years a squirrel, bound to do the bidding of a wicked fairy. Seven years, the longest and the best of his young life, were thus gone from him; and of what use had they been, what experience had they given him? As he was thus lost in bitter musings, his father looked up, and seeing him still standing there in the doorway, said: "Well, young master, is there anything I can serve you in to-day? What do you say to a new pair of slippers? Or," with a laugh, "a little leathern case for your nose?"

"What 's wrong with my nose, then?" asked Jamie. "Why should I need a casing for it?"

"Well," said the cobbler, "every one to his taste; but let me tell you, if *I* had such a frightful nose, I 'd have a little case made for it of scarlet morocco leather. Look here, I 've a nice piece by me that would just do — one would want at least an ell, though, to make a proper one for you! But think, my little man, how well protected you would be; at present I 'm certain you 'll go knocking up against every doorpost and every cart that you come across!"

Jamie was dumb with terror — he touched his nose. Lo and behold, it was thick and swollen, and a good two handbreadths in length! So the witch had in addition transformed him into an ugly dwarf; that was why his mother had not recognized him — that was why she drove him away from her!

"Master," said he, half crying, "master, have you a mirror of any kind, that I may look at myself in it?"

"Young man," said the cobbler, in a stern voice, "yours is not exactly a face or figure of which you need feel vain.

There is no cause for looking at yourself every minute in the glass. Cure yourself, if you can, of the habit; it's a very ridiculous one that all you dwarfs have."

"Ah! but just give me a mirror for a moment; I tell you, 't is not vanity that makes me want to look in it."

"Go, go; leave me in peace; I don't possess such a thing. My wife has one somewhere; but I can't say where she has put it. If you really must look at yourself in the glass, why don't you go over the way there to Urban's, the barber's; he 's got a looking-glass twice the size of your head. Just go and look at that; and let me wish you a very good morning!"

With these words his father pushed him gently outside the door of the shop and locked it. Jamie, half in tears, crossed the street and went into Urban's, a barber whom he remembered perfectly well in days gone by.

"Good morning, Urban," said he; "I 've come to ask you a favour — whether you 'll be so kind as to let me look at myself in your glass?"

To this the barber jeeringly consented; and, amid peals of laughter from all the customers, he led him up to the mirror.

"Ah!" thought Jamie, with a shudder, "no wonder mother did not know her boy again when she saw him!"

His eyes were like the eyes of pigs, so small and sunken were they; his nose was huge in size, and stuck out below his chin. He did not seem to have any neck at all, for his head was deeply set in his shoulders, and it hurt him extremely to turn it either to the right or to the left. His body was no bigger than it was when he was twelve; instead of growing in height he had grown in breadth, and his back and shoulders were broad and distended, like some overfilled flour-sack, which his little puny legs seemed half unable to support. His arms, however, looked all the longer, for they were the size of those of an ordinary well-grown man; his hands were coarse-looking and of a brownish-yellow hue, with long, spider fingers; he could touch the floor with them without bending at all. This was how he looked — a miserable, misshapen dwarf!

Then he remembered the morning when the old woman came and bought cabbages at his mother's stall. All that he had found fault with in her personal appearance —her long nose, her hideous hands, her yellow skin and neck — all these things she had endowed him with, everything excepting her long neck; this she had quite left away; he had none at all now.

"Well, my lord, have you done admiring yourself?" asked the barber, laughingly, as he patted him on the shoulder. "Look here, I'll make you a good offer. Will you come and help me in the shop — mix the lather, strop the razors for me, and, what's more, amuse my customers? I promise you plenty to eat and to drink, a room to live in, and money besides. Come, what say you? Is it a bargain?"

Jamie was enraged at the very thought of lowering himself to be a mere barber's puppet; but he said nothing beyond that he had no time to give to that sort of employment, and went on out into the street again.

Though the wicked fairy had bewitched his person, and made it vile, his mind, his feelings were beyond her power — of this he felt certain. His thoughts were not those of seven years ago; no, he seemed to have gained in sense and in wisdom. It was not his lost comeliness, nor his hideous deformity that made him sorrowful; it was because he had been driven like a hound from his father's door. He would try yet once more; perhaps his mother might recognize him after all.

Returning to the market, he begged her to listen quietly to what he had to say. He brought back to her memory the day on which he went away with the old woman to carry home her vegetables; he mentioned many a little incident of his childish years; told her, too, of his service as squirrel in the fairy's house, and how she had changed him thus because he had openly noticed particular points of ugliness in her person. The cobbler's wife was at a loss what to think. These trivial anecdotes of his child-life were all just as she herself would have recounted them; but the story about being seven years a squirrel quite surpassed her powers of belief.

"It's impossible," quoth she; "besides, there are no fairies now-a-days!" To look at him, too, this hateful, loathsome dwarf! 'T was not her Jamie; she could never, never believe it! At last she thought that the best plan would be to go and speak to her husband about it. Gathering up her baskets she started for home, taking Jamie with her.

"Look, husband," said she, on reaching the shop, "this manikin here declares that he is our lost Jamie. He 's been telling me a long tale about how he was kidnapped seven years ago, and how a wicked fairy worked his present unsightly transformation."

"So, ho," struck in the cobbler angrily; "he 's been telling you all that, has he? Wait a bit, you little wretch! He 's had the whole story from me not an hour ago; and now he goes and gulls you like this! A wicked fairy transformed you, eh? did she? Well, come now, and let me break the spell!" So saying, he seized a stout leathern thong lying beside him, with which he soundly belaboured poor Jamie's back, until he ran away shrieking with pain.

In this town, just as everywhere else, there were but few possessed of compassion enough to give help to a victim of misfortune, when that victim also labours under the disadvantage of some personal defect in itself unusual or absurd. Thus it came that the poor dwarf passed the whole day without tasting food, and at nightfall was forced to choose the cold, hard steps of a neighbouring church as his bed.

When, with the early light of morning on his face, he awoke he bethought him seriously how he should earn a living now that both father and mother had spurned him from them. His pride was sufficient to keep him from playing signboard as it were, to a barber; he would never let himself out on hire as mountebank or as gapingstock to the public — what, then, should he do? Suddenly he remembered how great his proficiency had been, when a squirrel, in the art of cooking; not unreasonably he thought that he might hold his own against many another of his craft; and accordingly he determined to put his talent to account.

When the morning wore on, and the stir grew more general in the streets, he first of all entered the church, where he knelt down and prayed. Then he set forward upon his way. The Duke, who was lord of all the land thereabouts, was known to be a great lover of dainty dishes and sumptuous meats; indeed, he was wont to choose his cooks from every quarter of the globe. It was to his palace that Jamie went. On reaching the outer gate, the sentries there asked what might be his business, and had their laugh at him withal; but he, nothing daunted, inquired for the chief cook of the palace. As they laughingly led him through the courtyards, all the servants, as he passed them, stood still to look after him, until one after another in a long train they followed him up the palace stairs. Grooms left their stables; scullions, their work of washing dishes; men beating carpets forgot entirely what they were about in the general scramble and crush; while the cry everywhere was: "A dwarf! a dwarf! have you seen the dwarf?"

Suddenly the major-domo appeared, his face purple with fury, and swinging a huge whip in his hand.

"What 's all this noise about, you set of curs? Don't you know that His Highness is still asleep?" and he slashed the whip smartly about the backs of two or three luckless grooms.

"Oh! sir," cried they, "oh! sir, here we 've brought you in a dwarf — one such as you have surely never seen before!"

The major-domo struggled hard with his laughter on looking at poor little Jamie; he felt that merriment would be fatal to his dignity. Driving back the remaining servants with his whip, he led the dwarf into an anteroom, and asked him what he wanted. On hearing that it was the inspector of the kitchen whom Jamie sought, he said kindly:

"You 've made a mistake, my boy; it 's not the inspector, but myself, that you want; you would like to be made the Duke's pet dwarf, is n 't that it?"

"No, sir," answered the little fellow; "I 'm a skilled cook, with experience in the making of all kinds of rare dishes; will you take me to the kitchen inspector, please? He may be able to profit by my talent."

"As you will, little man, as you will; you 're surely rather a stupid fellow, though, to choose the kitchen — *the kitchen* forsooth! Why, as the Duke's dwarf, you 'd have had no work to do, but plenty to eat and drink, and handsome clothes into the bargain. But come, let 's see; you will hardly know enough about cooking to be able to prepare dainties for His Highness's table; and to be a mere kitchen-lad, you 're too good!"

With these words the major-domo took him by the hand, and led him to the apartments of the inspector of the kitchen.

"Good master," said the dwarf, as he bowed low until his nose touched the carpet, "are you in need of a skillful cook?"

The inspector scanned him from head to foot, and then burst into loud laughter.

"What!" he cried, "*you* a cook? Why, do you think that our fireplaces are so low that such as you could stand over them and look into the saucepans? No, no, my manikin, whoever it was that recommended you to come here to me and ask for a post as cook must surely have been wanting to fool you." And the inspector burst out laughing again; the major-domo laughed with him; and so did all the servants who were listening and looking on.

But the dwarf was not so easily shaken from his purpose. "Give me any sort of tasty dish to get ready for you," said he, confidently, "no matter what it is, provided you find me the things I need for the making of it. I 'll prepare it here directly before your eyes; and you 'll be bound to confess that if I call myself cook, I 've a right to the name!"

This and many like things the little man kept saying as his tiny eyes twinkled, and his long nose kept wriggling about, while with his spidery fingers he sought to give emphasis to enforce his speech.

"Well, well," said the major-domo, linking his arm in that of the inspector, "it shall be so, just for a joke; come, let 's go to the kitchen."

And they passed on to it through numerous corridors and halls. It was a large, spacious apartment, splendidly fitted up; there were some twenty hearths, in each of which a fire was burning, while between them ran a stream of clear, sparkling water, which served to keep live fish in as well. Those viands which were in constant use were stored in cupboards made of marble and costly woods, while to the right and to the left were ten purveying rooms, where all the choicest of choice food was stored, and many rare delicacies to tempt the human palate, that had been brought at great cost from all parts of the world. Kitchen-men of all kinds ran hither and thither, rattling and bustling among the pots and pans; but as soon as the inspector came into the kitchen, they one and all stood motionless. All that could be heard was the crackling of the fire and the plash and ripple of the little stream.

"What has His Highness ordered for breakfast to-day?" asked the inspector of the senior breakfast-maker.

"'T is the Danish soup, sir, that my lord has ordered — the Danish soup, with red Hamburg rissoles."

"Good," said the inspector. "You hear what it is the Duke wishes to have. Do you think you are able to cook such things? Well, the *rissoles* you 'll certainly not make properly, for the recipe 's a secret."

"Oh! there 's nothing easier," replied the dwarf, amid general astonishment. He had often had to make this dish for the old witch. "Nothing easier! For the soup, just get me such and such herbs, such and such spices, some wild boar's lard, some roots, and eggs. For the rissoles, though" — and here he lowered his voice so that only the inspector and the major-domo should catch what he said — "for the rissoles I shall want four sorts of meat, some wine, some duck's fat, some ginger, and also a certain herb called *Bellybalm!*"

"Ha, by St. Benedict! Of what sorcerer did you learn your art?" cried the cook in amazement. "He 's told us the recipe to a hair, while of the use of *Bellybalm* we ourselves know nothing. Yes, if *that* were put in, it would certainly make the rissoles even more delicious. Oh, you 're a marvellous cook, indeed!"

"I should never have thought as much," said the inspector; "but now we must try him in the matter; give him the things he asks for, utensils and all, and let him serve up breakfast."

So it was done as he bade; everything was got ready on hearth and dresser; but the dwarf, so they found, could never reach up to the saucepans, for his head hardly came so high. Then two chairs were set side by side, on which mahogany boards were placed; and the little fellow was invited to begin his performance. All the cooks and servants and scullions stood round in a row, to watch and wonder at his quick and adroit way of going to work, and to marvel at the cleanliness and nattiness he showed in mixing his ingredients. When everything was prepared, he ordered both saucepans to be set on the fire, where they were to boil until the exact minute that he would fix by calling out "Stop!" Then he began counting to himself, one, two, three, and so on. Just as he got to five hundred, he called out, "Stop!" when the saucepans were taken off the fire, and he asked the inspector to come and taste their contents.

The head cook accordingly took a golden spoon, and having rinsed it in the stream, he handed it to the inspector, who advanced with much grandeur of manner to the saucepans, and after tasting what they contained, closing his eyes and smacking his lips in sign of satisfaction, said: "First rate! upon my honour, delicious! Won't *you* try a spoonful, major-domo?"

The major-domo bowed, took the spoon, and tasted also. He, too, was loud in praise of the excellence of the dwarf's cooking. Bowing to the head cook, he said, "With all due deference to your skill and experience, *chef* — and these, as we know, are great — I must still maintain that you 've never yet made soup quite so delicious as this." After the cook had tasted, too, he shook the dwarf half-respectfully by the hand, saying: "Little fellow, you 're a master in the art. Yes, that herb *Bellybalm*, 't is that which gives to everything such a specially nice flavour."

Just as he spoke, an equerry of the Duke's came into the kitchen to say that His Highness wished breakfast to be served immediately. The rissoles and the soup were accordingly set on dishes of silver and sent up to the ducal breakfast chamber. The inspector then led the dwarf back to his room, where they sat and talked together. They had not been there long before a messenger came to the door, to summon the inspector to the Duke. Making a hurried change in his dress, he followed the messenger as quickly as possible.

The Duke appeared to be in a state of great good humour. The silver dishes in front of him were all empty; he was just using his napkin as the inspector entered. "Aha, inspector," said he, "I have always been extremely satisfied with the cooks under your management, but, say, now, who was it that got my breakfast ready this morning? Never, since I became Grand Duke, have I eaten such a delicious one; you must tell me the cook's name, and I 'll send him down a few ducats as a present."

"My lord, 't is a wonderful story," replied the inspector, as he proceeded to relate all the occurrences of the morning. The Duke was very much surprised, and sent for the dwarf, whom he questioned as to his home and parentage. Poor little Jamie could not confess that, through enchantment, he had been turned into a squirrel; still, he kept to the truth in saying that he had no father nor mother, and that his cooking had been taught him by an old woman. The Duke asked no more questions; it was enough pleasure for him merely to gaze at the strange shape of his new cook.

"If you 'll stay with me in my employ," said he, "I 'll give you fifty ducats a year, and many rich suits of clothes. But in exchange for this you will have to prepare my breakfast yourself every morning, must give directions as to the cooking of my dinner; in fact, I shall expect you to superintend the entire kitchen. As each in the palace answers to the name that I give him, you shall be called Longnose, and are forthwith invested with the honour of sub-director of the kitchen."

The dwarf bowed low to his master, the Duke; and, kissing his feet, promised to serve him honestly and well.

So far, therefore, the little fellow had found a livelihood; and right honourably he filled his post while it was his, for the Duke, so everyone said, was quite another man so long as he kept the dwarf under his roof. Formerly it had often pleased him to hurl any stray bowls or dishes at the heads of his cooks. Ay, and one day he even threw at the director himself some semi-cooked calves' feet (that ought by rights to have been soft), and this hit him such a thump on the temples that he fell flat down, and was carried to bed, where he had to stay for three whole days. Certainly for what he thus did in anger, the Duke always sought to make amends by giving his victims a few handfuls of ducats; nevertheless, no cook ever came into his presence without trembling and shaking from head to foot. But ever since the dwarf had come, all was changed as if by magic. In order that the Duke might get the fullest enjoyment from his little servant's skill, there were now five meals a day instead of three; yet the Duke was never put out, and never showed any sign of discontent. No, he found something of newness, something peculiarly delicious in all that was set before him; he grew quite amiable and good-tempered, ay, and fatter, too, as the days went by. Longnose became the wonder of the town. The director was besieged with applications to see the dwarf at work in the kitchen; and some of the leading townsfolk won over the Duke into letting them send their servants to take lessons of his pet cook. This brought Jamie a good deal of money, as each servant paid a daily fee of half a ducat. However, to keep his fellow-cooks from becoming envious, he gave them all his earnings in this way, instead of spending them on himself.

Thus he lived for nearly two years in comfort and in honour; it was only the remembrance of his parents that brought him any sorrow. There was little that was exceptional in his life, until one day an extraordinary thing happened to him. He was, you must know, especially quick and clever in going to market to make purchases, so that, whenever it was possible, he always went himself to buy fruit and vegetables, meat and poultry. One morning he was at the goose-market, looking about him for a nice fat goose, one such as he knew his master would relish. He had walked up and down three or four times, inspecting all that were on sale. His figure provoked no jeers, no mockery now; it inspired respect; for he was known as the famous cook in ordinary to His Highness the Grand Duke, and every saleswoman thought herself lucky if he but bent his nose over the goods upon her stall.

At last he noticed, sitting in a corner right at the end of the row of baskets, a woman who also had geese to sell, but who did not bawl for custom and vaunt the excellence of her wares as the others did. He went up to her to examine and weigh her geese. They seemed to be such as he needed, so he bought three of them together with a cage, and, hoisting them upon his broad shoulders, set out homeward. He thought it strange that only two of the geese gabbled and quacked in the usual way; the third one was quite still and motionless, as if it were absorbed in its own troubles, and it sighed from time to time, groaning like a human being. "I dare say it 's unwell, poor thing!" muttered he to himself; "I must make haste and kill it as soon as I get back." To this the goose made answer as follows, in a perfectly clear and audible voice:

"Knife me,
And I bite thee;
Twist but my neck to stop my breath,
And I will work thy early death!"

Terrified, he put down the cage upon the ground, and the goose looked at him through the bars with lovely, wistful eyes as it sighed again.

"Well, I never!" cried the dwarf. "So you can talk, can you, mother goose? I should never have thought that. There, there, don't be frightened; I know what I 'm about; and a rare bird like yourself shall come by no harm through me. But I will wager that you have not always had feathers on you like this. Why, I was a wretched little squirrel myself once!"

"You are right," answered the goose; "right in saying that this degrading body was not mine at birth. Alas! was n't it sung to me in my cradle that I, Mimi, daughter of Wetterbock the Great, should meet my death in the kichen of a duke!"

"Prithee, be calm, dear Mademoiselle Mimi," besought the dwarf in a voice of comfort. "So sure as I am an honest wight and sub-inspector of the kitchen to His Highness the Grand Duke, not a soul shall do you any injury. I will arrange that you have a coop in my own apartments, with just as much food as ever you want; and my spare time will be devoted to your amusement. I shall tell my fellow-cooks that I am fattening up a goose for the Duke with all kinds of rare herbs; and at the first opportunity I will give you your freedom."

With tears in her eyes, the goose thanked him for this promise, a promise which he faithfully kept. The two other geese were killed, but for Mimi he caused a special coop to be made, under the pretext of fattening her in a peculiar kind of way for the Duke's table. And it certainly was a peculiar kind of way, for instead of ordinary food, he gave her pastry and cake and sweetmeats. Whatever leisure he had was spent in her society, in chatting with her and in trying to console her. They each told their histories to the other, and in this way the dwarf discovered that the goose was a daughter of Wetterbock, the magician, who lived on the island of Gothland. He had quarrelled with an old fairy, who by rancour and cunning had overcome him. As a revenge, the witch changed Mimi into a goose, and transported her instantly to this place, far, far away from her own home. When Jamie had related his adventures, too, she said:

"In matters like these I am not without experience. My father taught both my sisters and myself as much at least of the magic art as he dared to disclose. From your account of the quarrel about herbs at the market, from your sudden transformation on smelling that particular plant, as also from certain words that you tell me were uttered by the fairy, I can see that you must have been bewitched by a particular kind of herb, which, if you are able to find it, will enable you even now to break the spell." Small comfort this to poor Jamie, for where should he go hunting for herbs? However, he thanked the goose all the same, and did not wholly relinquish hope.

About this time one of the neighbouring princes, a friend of the Duke's, came on a visit to the palace. His Highness accordingly sent for the dwarf, and spoke thus to him: "There is now opportunity for you," said he, "to prove whether you serve me truly, and whether you are really master of the art you profess. This Prince, my guest, is known to keep the best table of anyone besides myself; he is, moreover, a great critic of good cookery. So it must be your business to cause him daily more and more surprise at the food which is set before him. Remember that at your peril no dish may be sent up twice to table. You are at liberty to procure from my purse-bearer whatever money you may need. If you want gold or even diamonds as ingredients to your dishes, why, take them, that 's all. I 'd rather be out of pocket than out of countenance before an epicure like this."

Thus spake the Duke; and the dwarf bowed respectfully as he answered: "It shall be even as you wish, my lord; so God will, I 'll cook everything in a way to suit the palate of this prince of epicures."

The little fellow now summoned all the resources of his art to help him in the task before him. If he was lavish in his use of the Duke's purse, far less did he seek to spare himself. All day he was to be seen swathed in a cloud of smoke and flame, while his voice continually rang through the lofty kitchen, as he went about giving orders here and there to the cooks under him.

A fortnight passed. The princely visitor had lived right royally; every meal had given him fresh pleasure. Five times a day (and no less) had they sat down to table, and the Duke was thoroughly satisfied with his dwarf's skill, for he saw contentment written in the face of his guest. On the fifteenth day, however, the Duke sent for Longnose, and presented him to the Prince, whom he asked whether, as a cook, he had pleased him or not.

"In sooth, you 're a wonderful cook!" said the Prince; "and I see that you know what good living means. The whole time I have been here not twice was the same dish set before me; and everything, too, has been cooked to perfection. But, tell me, how is it that you 've never yet given us the very queen of things delicious, the *Pâté Suzerain?*"

The dwarf was in dismay; he had never even heard of this dish of dishes. But, without losing his presence of mind. he answered:

"Oh, my lord, I hoped that peradventure your countenance would light up this our court for some long time to come; and thus I was keeping this delicacy in reserve, for with what else, excepting with that, could I seek to give you a last delight on the day of departure?"

"So, ho!" laughed the Duke; "and in *my* case, I suppose, you would have waited until I died before you yielded *me* this last delight? For, so far, I have never seen such a thing on my table. However, you must plan some other surprise for me, as I shall expect the pâté to appear at breakfast to-morrow."

"Very good, my lord; it shall be done as you say," answered Longnose, as he withdrew. But there was little joy in his mind, for his day of failure and disgrace had come. How to make the pasty he knew not. He went to his own room and wept. Mimi, the goose, found him there, and she asked the cause of his grief.

"Dry your tears," said she, on being told about the *Pâté Suzerain.* "This was a dish that often came up to my father's table; and I know pretty well what is needed to the making of it. You must take that and that, so much of one thing, so much of the other; and if there 's not everything used that ought to be used, why the Duke and his guest must have wonderful tastes indeed if they manage to detect what is wanting."

That is what the goose said, and Longnose, as he listened, sprang up joyfully, and blessing the day on which he had bought her, set instantly to work to make this queen of pasties. When the morning came, he sent it up with a wreath of flowers round it to the breakfast table, and, putting on his gay clothes, went into the hall just as the pasty was being carved.

"Aha! aha!" spluttered the Duke through a huge mouthful; "this sort of thing is justly called the queen of all pasties;

ay, and my dwarf 's the king of all cooks, too, don't you think so, Prince?"

The Prince took a little piece on his plate and tasted it carefully, and there was something of scorn and mystery in his laugh as pushing away the plate, he answered: "The stuff is well enough as to the making, but for all that it is not the real *Pâté Suzerain!* I expected as much."

Then there were furrows in the forehead of the Duke, as he grew crimson with rage and shame. "Oh, you dog of a dwarf!" roared he, "how dare you trick your master thus? Shall I chop your great noddle off by way of punishment?"

"Oh, my lord," stuttered Longnose, "indeed, indeed, I 've made the dish just as it should be made; surely there 's nothing left out of the recipe." And he trembled again.

"'T is a lie, villain!" retorted the Duke, as he kicked him backwards. "'T is a lie, otherwise my guest here would never say it were not the real thing. I 'll have you chopped up and baked in a pie yourself!"

"Oh, have mercy!" cried the poor dwarf, as he fell forward upon his knees and clutched the Prince's feet. "Do but tell me what is wanting in the pasty; say what it is that fails to tickle your palate. Don't let me forfeit life just for a handful of meal or flour!"

"'T will not help you much, my good Longnose," scoffed the other, "if I do tell you. I thought all along that you 'd never make the pasty quite as *my* cook makes it. For you must know that it needs an herb that in this country is entirely unknown, an herb called *Sneeze-with-delight* — 't is this condiment that the pasty lacks; and your master will never have the dish quite as *I* am wont to eat it."

"But I *will*, though," quoth the Duke, in a frenzy of rage; "you shall see if I don't! Upon my honour, I swear it, that before morning I 'll either set that pasty before you, or else — this vagabond's head spiked upon the palace gate. Away with you, hound! Once more I grant you four and twenty hours' grace."

The dwarf went back to his chamber and told the goose his troubles, and how that he must certainly die, for he had never even heard of the herb that was needed to give a right flavour to the pasty. "Oh!" cried she, "*Sneeze-with-delight;* is *that* all that 's wanting? then I think I can help you, for my father taught me how to tell every sort of herb. Certainly at any other time you 'd have been a dead man, but luckily it is just new moon to-night, a time when the plant is in flower. By the way, are there any old chestnut trees hereabouts, near the palace?"

"Yes, yes, there are!" cried the dwarf, taking heart again; "there 's a whole group of them at the edge of the lake, not far from the house. But why chestnut trees — of what use are they?"

"'T is only round about their roots that this herb ever grows," said Mimi, "so let us lose no time in searching for it. See, take me under your arm, and when we get into the open let me go, and I 'll look about for it for you."

He did as she told him, and they went together to the palace gate. But the man-at-arms barred his passage with his halberd as he said, "No, no, my good Longnose; it 's all up with you, I 'm afraid. I am under the strictest orders not to let you leave the palace."

"Well, but I may go into the garden, surely," rejoined the dwarf. "Be good enough to get permission from the major-domo for me to go into the garden to look for herbs."

This the sentry did, and the request was granted; for the garden had a high wall running round it, and escape from there was impossible. But when the dwarf and Mimi were come into the open, he put her carefully down, and she ran swiftly forward toward the lake. He followed her with a heavy heart; it was his last, his only hope; if she failed to find the plant he had resolved to drown himself, rather than submit to being beheaded. The goose searched vainly here, there, and everywhere — she looked under all the chestnut trees and grubbed up all the turf with her bill. But there was nothing, nothing to be found. At last, from mingled fear and sympathy, she fell a-weeping; evening had come on; it was growing darker, so that it became increasingly difficult to distinguish surrounding objects.

Suddenly the dwarf turned his gaze across the water, as he exclaimed: "See, see yonder, on the other side of the lake, there 's a large old tree growing; come, let us go and look there; maybe we shall find the herb at its foot."

The goose hopped and flew forward, while he ran behind her just as fast as his tiny legs would let him. The chestnut tree threw a deep shade all round about, so that it was almost too dark to see anything near its trunk. But on a sudden the goose stopped short and flapped her wings with joy as, thrusting her head into the long grass, she plucked at something, which she promptly handed to her astonished companion.

"That 's the herb," quoth she; "much of it grows here, I find, so that there will always be a supply for you in the future."

The dwarf looked hard and earnestly at the plant in his hand; it gave forth a sweet scent that unconsciously took him back to his days of slavery and squirreldom. Its leaves and stalk were of a bluish green; the flower was flame-coloured, with a margin of yellow.

"Thank Heaven!" cried he, at length. "'T is a miracle! For, look, this herb is the same, methinks, as the one which changed me from a squirrel to my present loathsome form. Shall I again give it a trial?"

"Not yet, not yet!" besought Mimi. "Take a handful of it along with you; let us go back to your room and gather together all your money and belongings; then we will put the power of this plant to the test."

As they both returned to the chamber, the dwarf's heart beat high with expectancy. Wrapping up some clothes and about fifty or sixty ducats — his entire savings — into a bundle, he cried out, "If Heaven wills it, I shall now be rid of this present yoke." And he took a long, deep sniff at the herbs in his hand, drinking in their aromatic fragrance.

Instantly there was a bursting and cracking in all his limbs; he felt that his head stood out from his shoulders; and by squinting at his nose he could see that it was growing smaller and smaller. His back and chest began to straighten; and his legs gained in length and shape.

The goose looked on in amazement at this transformation. "Ah! how tall, how handsome you have become!" she cried. "There 's nothing remains now of your old self, Heaven be praised!"

Jamie was overjoyed, and with folded hands knelt down to say a prayer of gratitude. But in his delight he did not forget in how far he owed his deliverance to the goose. His first impulse was to go straight home to his parents, but this he overcame, as, addressing Mimi, he said:

"Whom but you have I to thank for my becoming once more myself? Without your help I should never have found this herb, and my life, if not ended by the executioner's axe, would ever have been spent in the hideous guise of a dwarf. And now, if I can, I will in turn give *you* help. I will take you to your father, the magician, and he, with his rare knowledge of all kinds of plants, will easily bring about your transformation."

The goose shed tears of gratitude as she joyfully consented. And Jamie, whom no one could recognize, passed her through the palace gates, and they went forward together along the road which led to Mimi's home.

What else of their history can I recount? That they came in safety to their journey's end; that Mimi by her father's aid regained her original shape; that Jamie was loaded by both of them with rich presents; and finally that his parents were not slow to recognize their darling son this time, with whom they lived in happiness and ease until their death — is there aught but this left to tell; and did you not foresee it all without any hints from me?

There is only this much left to relate; namely, that upon the dwarf's disappearance from the palace there was great excitement and commotion, for when, on the day following, the Duke gave orders for his execution, Longnose was nowhere to be found. The Prince insinuated that his host had put the dwarf in safe hiding somewhere, so as to avoid having to rob himself of his best cook; moreover, he accused him of faithlessness in not keeping his word. Through this dispute a war broke out, which in history is well known as the great "Herb War." Many and dire were the battles fought, but at the end peace was established; and this peace was called the "Pasty Peace," because at the grand banquet given to celebrate it the Prince's cook sent up to the feast one of his own inimitable *Suzerain Pâtés*, of which the Duke ate heartily, declaring it to be more excellent than anything ever prepared for him by "Longnose the Dwarf."

THE END

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